

Lemme guess.... This one is gonna annoy some folks. But that's okay, I need to get this off my chest.

I see some folks making the same mistakes with their style over and over...and it's tragic. You gotta learn quickly in this game. After all, what's the point of any skill or passion if you're not constantly improving and getting better at it?

Why shouldn't you get the exact same amount of love and recognition other brothers are out here getting?

It's true that every black man has their own unique spin on the concept of "dressing well". But some things are universal when it comes to fashion. Don't be one of these folks who never figure it out...don't be one of the slow learners. Today's post is to help you avoid exactly that.

On the other hand, you have the veterans. The guys who have been doing this for years...and I'm sure that when they scan this post- They will nod and agree.

If you follow these 15 blunt rules, you'll achieve that definition of "sharp" that turns heads and establishes you as the best dresser around.

## **1. Invest in Timeless Looks**



In the same way that you investment in things like a car, a house, etc..... you should be making an investment in your wardrobe. A good, tailored wardrobe is expensive, so when you spend some hard-earned money on it, you should ensure it's built to last.

That's why it's smart to focus on more timeless style - the type of style that looks good year in, year out. In other words. Avoid trends, fads, and waves. Focus on what never stops looking good.

The suits that men wore in the past still hold true for the most part today. Things like dress shirts, ties, belts etc. remain mostly constant from year to year. The types of formal / gentleman apparel that fall into this category include:

- Blazers,
- Ties
- Sport jackets (Wool, Tweed, etc.)
- Khakis

- Dress Pants / Trousers,
- Dress Shoes

That's just a sampling - there's plenty of other stylish staples that you need in your wardrobe

On the other hand, think of some of the trends from yesteryear that have since fallen out of fashion - except for occasional "throwback" situations. Rappers used to wear tall tees, du-rags, etc. and you don't see anyone wearing that stuff now.

So, make sure you're building your wardrobe around the staples that are here to stay.

## **2. Understand Colors That Look Good on You**

Here's one I've already mentioned several times on this site, but it still holds true. Black men have a selection and range of colors available to them that most other men have a hard time pulling off.

Yes sir. I love to mix brighter colors into my wardrobe whenever I can- light red and blue button downs, blazers, and fabrics. White and tan chinos and dress pants. Khakis, light blue jeans and so on.

For men with darker skin, lighter colors in your outfit create a visual effect of contrast. For the men with lighter skin, consider incorporating a variety of colors and pieces outside of khaki, tan and brown.

When you start mixing in the right colors into your wardrobe, it takes you a long way. Plus, you'll have the added bonus of making your outfits that much more memorable. To be sharp is to be bold.

## **3. Build a Strong Foundation**

Building a strong foundation for your wardrobe is essential. We already touched on this a bit, but let's get into it a little more. You see, like building a house, a strong foundation is essential because it prevents you from having to revamp your wardrobe down the line.

Who's to say that, if you spend your money on a \$300 winter pea coat you only get to wear 3 months out of the year.... It was the smart decision? Especially when all your jeans are frayed and in need of replacement? Or you don't have enough plain white undershirts?

If you don't have the most basic staples - jeans, khakis, a white dress shirt, a black tie, a belt - you have no business sinking money into expensive designer articles of clothing. Don't try to run

before you can walk. This, of course, sounds really simple, but you'd be surprised...one step at a time.

#### **4. Get the Fit Just Right**



Fit matters.

We all know this, even if some don't want to admit it. And sure, it's a touchy subject, especially among mature black men. I can't tell you how much the old heads hit me up and let me know - "we ain't down for that skinny leg crap!"

That's true, and I get that. There's such a thing as too tight. But hey, there's a happy medium in there. While skinny fit jeans, dress pants, etc. are too far in the other direction, there's no reason to wear loose/baggy fitting clothing either.

Hey, I said these rules were blunt...

The fit of your clothing is everything. I know some folks aren't down to hear that. A \$500 suit will look like a \$100 suit unless it's tailored. A good fit needs to flatter your body.

A good fit draws attention to the areas of your body that you want to highlight - big arms, shoulders, etc. while drawing attention away from the areas of the body you don't want to draw eyes towards.

There's simply no point in investing money into expensive articles of clothing/outfits unless they fit you reasonably well (if not, time to go to the tailor to fix that). Take the time to understand your body, and your body's measurements - in the chest, inseam, leg length, etc.

And above all, make sure you realize that a \$75 outfit can look better than a \$300 one if it fits your body. With a good fit, people have a better impression of the way you dress. In other words, find a good tailor.

## **5. Go for Quality Materials**

Let's go back to that house analogy... when a contractor is building your house from the ground up, you want to make sure the contractor's using the highest quality materials, right? Shoddy materials can make for a pain in the you-know-what a few years down the road.

What's skimping on a few thousand bucks in the early going if it comes back to bite you later? That's why people opt for granite walls over plastic, hardwood floors over something cheaper, and so on. (Yeah, I ain't no house builder, you get my point...)

So again, treat your clothing like an investment. Avoid buying from stores that you know offer the cheapest prices, because if those shirts, pants, etc. fall apart / tear quickly, you're back to ground zero.

Go for quality. It's a better idea to buy an expensive blazer if you know it's going to last you decades, rather than a cheaper one that will only last a few years.

If you can afford something slightly better, think of the payoff in terms of lasting quality. Now, of course, this doesn't mean you should buy designer everything... you'll bankrupt yourself pretty quickly that way.

Instead, go for that happy medium.

For the business executives that spend their time jet-setting to and fro from exotic locales, you might want to consider sinking money into Italian bespoke suits from luxury brands. For the average Joe, it's probably a bit smarter to find a few department stores that you trust to deliver high-quality materials, then take what you can to a tailor.

Either way, build your wardrobe to last the same way you invest in quality in other areas of your life. You won't regret it.

## 6. Give Yourself Permission to Do So



“But when do I bust this stuff out?” “I don’t go to that many formal events”.

I get asked this all the time.

There’s no law saying you have to dress down 24/7 unless you’re going to a gala or some formal event. You can stunt anytime, anywhere!

The sooner you give yourself permission to do this, the better off you’re going to be. There’s a mental block that many men out there need to get over when it comes to this. Give yourself permission to be a better dresser.

Most folks don’t have a good reason to wear a sport coat, a blazer, or a tie - particular in casual offices and workplaces.

I myself worked in casual environments throughout my career, where most people literally show up to the office in Sketchers sneakers, graphic t-shirts, etc. What did I do?

I stepped up my game anyway. Start getting into the habit of dressing up at least a few days a week. It's easy to do once you try.

If you get accustomed to, say, tucking in your shirt when you're out and about running errands, it's the first step to being perceived as a sharp dresser. Reserve the sweatpants and T-shirts for home.

The other way to go about this, of course, is to add more dress-appropriate events to your social calendar. Joining a gentleman's club, attending more sit-down dinners, and so on. These give you an opportunity to look your best.

Whatever you do, recognize that being well-dressed is a constant endeavor. It's easy to fall into a cycle of comfort and dressing down and work - fight against that perception.

## **7. Elevate Your Outfits Above Others'**

Going hand in hand with the previous rule, you should always look to stay a step above the standard dress code in any environment.

For example, if the dress code at work is casual, consider business casual. If other people are wearing dress shirts and jeans, consider wearing a dress shirt, slacks, and wingtip dress shoes - and tucking in your shirt.

Any stylish brother knows that we stand out by virtue of being passionate about what we love. Hanging out with other black men, you'll know that they have style too, and love to show it off. Don't let yourself be overshadowed! When I and my friends get together, you know it's time to stunt.

Have some fun with it, turn it into an entertaining competition.

Not to take the joy out of things, but I really remain conscious of what the "style level" is in the room at all times, then seek to stay at least a step ahead of it. You can't flex if everyone else is wearing the exact same things you're wearing.

One other tip: when you do this, you'll often receive pushback from other people, asking you why you're dressed more formally / stylishly than everyone else? Especially in a casual setting.

Don't give in - this is your baseline now! Eventually, people will become accustomed to it - as you being you.

## 8. Specialize & Get Rid of Unused Clothes



Particularly if you have a smaller closet to store your wardrobe in. This one's important - if there's stuff in your closet that's gathering dust instead of being used, it might be time to get rid of it.

This may be counter-intuitive at first - after all, more options means more outfit combinations, right?

But the truth is, clutter is bad in all areas of life and style is no different. A messy closet is like a messy home - it becomes a pain until fix things. The sooner you get rid of the clothes that you don't want to wear, or have no chance to use, the sooner you can replace them.

And, in the process, take advantage of that free space in your closet by adding new pieces to wear.

I've always found that if you're going to cut down on the clutter in your closet, the best way to do it is by looking for anything that you haven't touched for at least two or three months (winter wear excluded when it's summer, and vice versa).

Whatever's hung for a long time and gathered a ton of dust - you need to go ahead and take it to Goodwill, sell it, or gift it to someone else.



## 9. Get Out of Your Comfort Zone



This one's important - you can't be a sharp dresser if you keep staying within your comfort zone. You've got to play to win.

Your style education never stops. The only way to keep learning is to try new combinations and experiment with new things. Sure, this makes you run the risk of potentially wearing an outfit one day that doesn't look as sharp as you want....

At the same time though, you'll sometimes be amazed by trying out something that you've never tried before, just to see how it looks. It could end up looking pretty fresh. For example, one time I tried wearing a vest over a button down and tie, something I never liked the look of....

I thought I looked like a waiter. To my surprise, when I was out that night, I received nothing but compliments on the look.

It takes constant experimentation and practice to eventually reach a breakthrough like that. In the process, you'll learn more about style and fashion and anything anyone else can teach you. Look to constantly try new combinations and layers.

## **10. Pay Close Attention to Other Outfits**

One of the biggest breakthroughs I had in terms of style is when I started to constantly pay attention to what other dudes were wearing. Specifically, other brothers of course. As you already know, when other black men are out and about, they typically do it big.

Consider it another chance to find clothes that you like. After all, we can only provide so much inspiration here at WDB...

A closed mind won't learn anything new, so accept that you're still a student at the end of the day. Even if you've been doing this for years, there's always an opportunity to learn new things about black men's style.

An open mind is like a sponge - it actively catches and soaks up new things. That's why carrying yourself like a beginner helps. It all starts with a conscious decision to pay attention a little bit more closely to what you see other fellas rocking.

## **11. Use Layers to Your Advantage**

Layering your clothing, as we've said before, is one of the most important aspects of being a sharp dresser. Layers let you get the absolute maximum value out of all pieces in your closet. Otherwise, those pieces will stay hanging, collecting dust, as you only use two items of clothing at a time - one shirt, one pair of jeans, etc.

Layers let you take your style to the next level by incorporating new coordinating colors, making a look sporty/preppy, and boosting your swag in the process. This is one of those rules that goes without saying.

## **12. Post Your Outfits / Get Feedback**



Feedback is important... a few outside opinions never hurt. Why not ask some friends for a bit of feedback on what looks good on you? And what doesn't?

It's a quick way to find out where you're going wrong and the types of fits, fabrics, etc. that look good on you. Once you get some honest, quality feedback from friends, it helps you start to play to your strengths.

In particular, look for the friends in your circle who actually dress well - there's not much of a point talking to your one friend who only wears sports jerseys and sweatpants. I'm sure you have a few folks that you can turn to for honest feedback.

Plus, you can go the extra mile and open an Instagram account (if you don't already have one). Those are the perfect places to post some photos of yourself and start getting feedback right away on outfits.

### **13. Invest Time, Not Just Money**

It takes more than just money to assemble the perfect wardrobe - a lot more in fact. No, you need to step back and realize that your style will always be evolving and adjusting, like any other interest.

A good wardrobe isn't created overnight - or even over a few months. Over time, you'll start noticing the smaller and smaller details that separate a good dresser from a sharp one. Every year, it seems that I learn more and more about the ideal Oxford, different fabrics and patterns, what goes with what, etc.

So, make sure to spend some time scrolling through the gram, paying attention to well-dressed folks IRL, and of course, coming back to this site for more inspiration.

#### **14.Ignore the Haters**

Hey, there are always a few, in any area of life. Most people won't come out directly and hate, instead, they'll throw shade, subtle comments, etc. about how you're overdressed.

This is especially significant for fellas to take a new interest in fashion - they'll face the most comments and shade like that. The secret to dealing with the negativity and jealousy like that is not to care and to just ignore it. Everyone will come to accept that this is your lifestyle and it's who you are.

#### **15.Make it Fun**



And of course, turn it into a game! Don't just make style a boring job. Dressing sharp may take some time, depending on your starting point.

And some days you'll look sharper than others. But no matter what, if you enjoy yourself throughout the journey, it passes quickly. Before you know it, you'll take a look around and realize that you have these rules down pat.

So, there you go - 15 blunt rules for black men who want to dress sharp and separate themselves from the pack. What about you - do you think there's anything missing? Hop into the comments and let us know.