



## STYLE

(ADVICE)



# EXPERT SPEAK

BOMBAY SHIRT COMPANY CO-FOUNDER **AKSHAY NARVEKAR** ON HOW MANY SHIRTS YOU SHOULD OWN AND OTHER EVERY DAY FASHION CONUNDRUMS



▶ **What is the difference between a dress shirt and a regular shirt and how does one go about making the right selection?**

The difference between a dress shirt and a regular shirt is in the details - starting with the fabric itself and moving on to the collar, cuffs and other elements of the shirt. Dress shirts tend to be more conservatively styled and understated in colour since they're meant for formal occasions. They tend to have stiffer collars (to withstand neckties and other accessories). Stiffer collars and shapes such as the point collar, spread collar or cutaway are more formal whereas button downs and skinny collars are commonly found in formal, regular shirts. Solid shades in patterned weaves are a must-have for formal events whereas Gingham checks and Madras checks are hard to go wrong with for more casual settings. That being said, the reverse can be

employed as well — just change the collars you choose and you're good to go.

▶ **How many shirts should a man own?**

There is no right answer to this as it is more of a personal preference. However, the ideal number would be around 15 - spread over work wear, formal wear and more informal variations. Also, you should make sure that you have all the basic shades in place such as white, blue, pink and grey. Ensure a healthy mix of fabrics and weaves - poplins, piques and dobby are for work while chambrays, linens and flannels are for play. Get your basics in place and then feel free to indulge depending on your penchant and fondness.

▶ **I find most shirts these days have collars that seem to be too limp**



▶ **and floppy. I like the high collar variety but cannot find them. Am I looking at the wrong places?**

The collar is the most important component of a shirt. The stiffness is determined by the weight of the interlining used in the collar. While limp collars are not desirable, overly stiff collars are not ideal on a shirt either. A collar must have the precise blend of stiffness and pliability. Much research goes in determining the GSM of the interlining used for a particular count of fabric. It must be fused at the precise temperature, pressure and timing. Almost all dress shirts are seen with stiff collars, while the opposite is true of casual shirts. A good place to look for a shirt with stand up collar is one of the bigger dress shirt manufacturers, primarily because they have access to the appropriate machinery. Custom shirt makers are another place you can look.

▶ **I find a lot of men wearing their jackets over shirts that are untucked. Is this a style you would recommend?**

Yes, as long as you can carry off the look. It's a style that's being used in mainstream fashion but it typically looks better on skinnier men. It's very important to pair the jacket with the right shirt and shoes as well. If the correct mix is not put together, it can end up having a disastrous effect and look haphazard. The tip is to take a calculated risk, that's what smart men do. My personal favorite is a crisp white shirt with a skinny collar, light grey trousers or jeans paired with a navy jacket.



*(Interviewed by Praachi Raniwala. If you have any wardrobe related queries, mail us at [editor@mansworldindia.com](mailto:editor@mansworldindia.com))*