

# Ties Can Match Your Image As Well As Your Suit

Your tie can make or break your image. When chosen wisely it brings color to your face, style and class to your dress, and individuality to your business "uniform."

Yet many men shop for a tie as if it were to be worn by their shirt and suit alone. They bring the suit and shirt to the counter and start trying the ties on the items of clothing, not thinking to try each tie on themselves.

I have often demonstrated to my clients how much impact - or how little - a tie has by having them "try it on." The better men's stores where I live are quite used to seeing men holding shirts and ties under their faces in front of a mirror.

Naturally a tie must look good with your suit and shirt, but never at the expense of your face or personality. If possible, buy the suit first, then the tie, and then choose a shirt to match both.

There are eight basic types of patterns: Solid, Rep (Striped), Foulard (Ivy League), Club, Plaid, Geometric, Dots, Paisley. Solid: Solids go well with solid suits, patterned jackets, and all shirts. They are versatile, and can be either bold or conservative. Dark silk solid ties have a quiet elegance, while casual wools and knits bring either subtle or bright color to your wardrobe without being busy or loud.

Some solids have a same-color pattern - red-on-red stripe, for example. These

are considered solids as long as they are subtle. Silk solids have a sheen which adds richness to the tie, but stay away from very shiny or brocade versions.

**Rep (striped):** Striped ties are based on the old regimental patterns. These days any diagonal stripe is called a "rep." This is the classic American business tie. The stripes may be quite thin, of varying widths, or even wide.

Your selection will depend on your body proportions and personality. With clear-colored suits, keep the stripes crisp; with suits in muted tones, the stripes should be softer.

**Club:** The club tie can be sporty or conservative. It has a regular pattern of "club-like" motifs - such as heraldic shields, sporting insignia, or animals - against a solid background. The pattern should be small, subtle, and not instantly recognizable. A tie with big, bold figures on it is not a club tie - and it is generally considered tacky.

**Plaid:** Plaid ties are usually considered casual. In heavy wool they are appropriate in the winter time with tweeds and muted herringbone. They do not go with pin-striped suits or the sleeker worsteds.

They can go well with flannel suits, however, and, when made of linen or cotton, plaid ties go with summer suits as well. Just remember to avoid garish or loud plaids at any time of year.

**Geometric:** Geometric

ties cover everything from the enlarged diamond pattern that is similar to an Ivy League tie, to criss-crossed or vertical striped patterns.

The large diamond shapes are more casual than the smaller versions, but either brings a pleasing angularity to your appearance - particularly useful for the large man.

**Dots:** Dots range from polka dots to pin dots. Traditionally a very elegant tie, the polka dot is almost as versatile as a solid tie. Very small pin dots are even more formal, and are used for evening or with more elegant business suits for special occasions.

**Paisley:** Paisley ties are useful because they combine so many colors that they can mix and match well. In stronger colors they are too sporty for a business look, but when the colors and fabric are restrained paisley ties are elegant and dressy.

How you wear the tie is as important as the tie itself. There are three standard knots; each one is suitable with different shirt collars and your overall body proportions. The tie knot should lie comfortably between your collar points with no gaps on

either side and not pinching or crowding.

Both wide-faced and thin-faced men should avoid very thin or very wide knots, which accentuate any proportion problems by either repeating the line or offering too extreme a contrast.

**The Four-in-Hand:** The four-in-hand is a longish knot and is proportioned

for the button-down collar or the standard collar of average spread.

**The Half Windsor:** The half windsor is more triangular, also proportioned for the standard collar.

**The Windsor:** The windsor knot is wide and triangular and is specifically for European spread or any shirt collar with a widish spread.

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