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Men should wear pants on the waist, not the hip

By Jill Haney

Question: I was downtown for the first time in awhile on a recent Friday just after the lunch hour, so many people were still on the street. It's funny because I commented to a friend at how poorly dressed everyone was. I realize everyone has their own style, but it was the sloppiness!

So many men, including those in nice suits, wear their belts so low in the front it's amazing. Please tell your readers to pull up their trousers. (I guess that would include an asterisk indicating you must be somewhat fit to do so!)

Answer: Your comment certainly has some merit. However, anytime weight becomes part of the issue it can become a sensitive topic and somewhat touchy to address.

Dressing properly for our body shape is a way for men and women to shave pounds off their look. For some reason, men who carry a few extra pounds have chosen to wear their pants below the bulge, and I am not sure why. I can only assume it is for comfort or because their pants won't stay up around their belly. For men with beer bellies, this can be especially challenging. In researching the topic for this column, I didn't discover any good explanation as to why this look has come about.

Most tailors will recommend that men wear their pants close to their natural waistline.

This does not mean men's pants must go up to their belly button, as this can create a bit of a Humpty Dumpty look, which by the way, is not a good one. However, raising the waistline to cover some of the bulge will actually help these men to look thinner and in many cases give the illusion of height.

Who doesn't want to look thinner and taller?

Dressing in this manner will often require that a man go up a pant size, and this will work best when worn with braces or suspenders (non-clip-on only, please).

One of my favorite style blogs, The Sartorialist, suggests to always "wear your pants on your waist, not your hips." Of course, I have never seen pictures of overweight men on this blog, but the information is absolutely correct.

Scott Schuman, of The Sartorialist, goes on to write, "I think it visually drops 10 pounds on a guy, because your shirt doesn't blouse out and hang over the belt as badly."

The key is to find the right balance where the body looks in proportion.

For some men, that will mean wearing the pants at the natural waist and for others a bit below the natural waist.

A quick check in a full-length mirror will tell you if the look is proportionate. If the pants always need to be pulled up or the shirt has a tendency to blouse out, you can be sure that your pants need to be pulled up.

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