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ON THE COVER

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BLADE RUNNER

Putting the best shaving supplies
At any budget to the test



The EPA estimates two billion disposable shavers are put into landfills every year. Cut down on that number by using the Preserve Triple Razor (£7.25 for four), a razor made from recycled plastic (including Stonyfield Farm yogurt containers) that is recyclable itself.



DISPOSABLE

Disposable razors—"shavers," as their manufacturers now call them have come a long way from the flimsy blue things you'd invariably find in the drawers of rarely-used guest bathrooms. Barbasol shaving cream, on the other hand, not so much. It's the same as it ever was, with a fluffy foam and a generically manly smell that may make you think fondly of your father and those first shaving lessons he gave you. The BIC Comfort 3 Advance is the best of breed, with three blades, an aloe and vitamin E strip, pivoting head and an ergonomic grip. It delivers a good, close shave, but you must take care and shave slowly. Disposable shavers seem sharp in that more-dangerous way common to cheaper goods, and it's easy to nick yourself. That said, these are a huge improvement over what disposables used to be and are perfect for stocking your Drop kit.

£5 Bic Comfort 3 Advance

(4 Pack)

£2 Barbasol Beard Buster



ILLUSTRATIONS BY LAURA-LOUISE BETTS

STRAIGHT RAZOR

If safety razors conjure images of prewar solidity and a time when men wore hats to work, then straight razors (aka "cut-throat" razors) conjure something else entirely: A time before automobiles and indoor plumbing, when modern medicine meant leeches and fashion meant having all your teeth. Straight razors today are not made for men who need to shave before work in the morning; rather they're for men who reject modern contrivances. But here's thing. Shaving with a straight razor is really scary, really difficult and time-consuming as hell. It's likely best left to the barbers who specialize in a proper hot lather shave. Which is a shame, as a straight razor is a severe yet beautiful thing—an all-business blade folding back out of its housing. But modern technology has trumped the chosen instrument of Bill the Butcher. Not so for Truefitt & Hill shave cream, an aromatic and rich substance that, with lathering from a real badger-hair shaving brush, will make a man feel like he's stepped back into a time of London drawing rooms and nobility. It's a fine addition to any daily shaving routine. Truefitt & Hill cream comes in a number of different scents (all with their matching aftershave balms), but the spicy, fragrant West Indian Limes variety is the hands-down best.

£106 DOVO Straight Razor,

£30 Truefitt & Hill West

Indian Limes Shaving Cream

CARTRIDGE

Gillette's well-made, finely tuned Fusion Phenom is currently winning the ever-escalating "War of How Many Razor Blades," with five on the main shaving surface and one on top for "precision trimming" around sideburns, moustaches and in that little space under one's nose where five-blade high ordnance just won't do. The razor itself looks like something from a Gatorade-sponsored future, and though some say anything more than two blades is overkill—never mind five—it can't be said that the Fusion Phenom doesn't deliver a super-fast, very close and almost impossible-to-screw-up shave. Fusion HydraGel shave gel comes in five varieties, from "Clear Skin" to "Tough Beard," and lathers thickly and aromatically, with a refreshing, citrus-y scent. If you want to severely minimize the time you'll spend on those 14,000 shaves you'll perform over your lifetime, and make it so you'll never have a nick again, the Gillette Fusion Phenom is your best bet by far.

£24 Gillette Fusion Phenom,

£3.89 Refills

£4 Gillette Fusion HydraGel

SAFETY RAZOR

Safety razors, as Max Fischer once famously remarked of piranhas in Rushmore, "are a very tricky species." They may have the same DNA as today's multi-blade breeds, but if you go at your face with the heedless abandon modern razors encourage, you're likely to give yourself quite a few nicks. So give yourself a bit more time in the morning—say, ten minutes as opposed to three. The Parker model Valet tested unscrews at the bottom, opening its butterfly head, into which you place a double-edged blade and then screw shut. As metallic and hefty as a Zippo lighter, it feels like a quality tool that will last for years. Kiehl's Ultimate Brushless Shave Cream is much the same way: It comes out thick as hand lotion (use a nickel size's worth, and don't worry about wetting your face beforehand), and smooths on in a solid, creamy sweep. Go for Kiehl's White Eagle variety, which has a bit of menthol and camphor. The key when shaving with a safety razor is to be careful. It may have a safety, but it's still a gun.

£29 Deluxe Vintage Butterfly

Safety Razor

£16 Kiehl's Ultimate

Brushless Shave Cream

HOW TO USE YOUR DOUBLE EDGE SAFETY RAZOR

OK, so you've finally given up on the plastic multi-blade cartridge razor that you've never been happy with anyway – Good! That's the first step in finding out just how much better your daily shaving routine can be. But be forewarned, if you don't take the time to learn how to properly use your new Double-Edge Safety Razor you will be no more satisfied with the results than you have been in the past. Putting the finest tools in the hands of an inexperienced workman will not elevate him from apprentice to journeyman – Only experience can do that.

Putting the finest tools in the hands of an inexperienced workman will not elevate him from apprentice to journeyman – Only experience can do that. With practice and the willingness to learn and adapt, the most inexperienced novice can quickly become a master craftsman. Shaving is the very same. The level of shave quality is just as much dependent on the skill of the user as it is on the razor he's using.

One of the primary reasons so many are switching back to traditional double-edge safety razors today is the rising cost of multi-blade razor cartridges. We've all seen the weekly cost of shaving using the popular multi-blade cartridges rise beyond the point of sanity in recent years. With an average weekly blade cost of only \$.45 when using the highest quality double-edge blades there is a powerful financial inducement to switch. But not buying good quality blades or not changing them often enough will surely have an effect on both the comfort and quality of the shave. Typically a good D/E blade will provide a week of great shaves in normal use. If you buy bargain basement brand blades, or try to stretch them beyond their useful life, the few pennies you save will become insignificant when you have to live with the irritation that will result. Buy the best blades available and change them at least once each week.

Tip: Many users assign one day of the week as blade changing day. Do this and make it part of your routine.

The single most often made mistake in using a D/E razor is applying too much pressure. A quality, well-made razor will have sufficient weight of its own to exert enough pressure. Apply NO added pressure – just allow the razor to glide across the skin without pushing into it. Bearing down on the razor will not necessarily result in a closer shave, but it will remove at least the top layer of skin cells, a condition commonly called "razor burn."

Razor burn actually is exactly the same thing as "rug burn" or "road rash." Though the latter two are typically more severe (even if it is more fun getting them) they really are exactly the same thing, a superficial abrasion resulting from the forcible removal of skin cells. A soft blanket will prevent rug burn, leather pants will safeguard against road rash, and NO PRESSURE ON THE RAZOR will solve razor burn.

Hold the razor firmly and direct it where you want it to go. Some shavers favour short strokes, others prefer long sweeping strokes.

Which is right for you will depend largely on your particular beard conditions. Generally speaking, the coarser or thicker the beard, the shorter the stroke should be. A very fine or sparse beard will present less resistance to the razor and permit a long, smooth stroke.

Strive to maintain a thirty degree blade angle relative to the skin. While this will not be possible on every area of the face – Ear lobes, noses, and other obstructions often make it impossible, thirty degrees is the optimum blade angle and should be used whenever possible. You achieve this angle by raising or lowering the razor handle. This is particularly important when following contours such as around the chin or jaw line. Often in these areas very short choppy strokes work well.

Most nicks or cuts happen when the razor's blade is allowed to make first contact with the skin. To avoid this, allow the safety bar to contact the skin first and lift the razor handle until you achieve the desired angle, then begin your forward motion. Once you've become more experienced this won't be necessary.

In order to get the closest possible shave some degree of skin stretching will be necessary. As we age, and our skin begins to lose some of its youthful elasticity this becomes even more important. The razor will glide more easily over taut skin just as pool balls roll more easily over a tight felt. You can often tighten the skin simply by flexing the facial muscles – Pulling the upper lip down or the lower lip up, pulling your pursed lips to the right or left, tightening the neck and jaw muscles, etc. When this isn't possible use your free hand to manually pull the skin in the opposite direction of razor travel – When starting the razor stroke at the sideburns and stroking downwards with the razor, pull the side burn up with the free hand. Skin stretching opens the hair follicle, exposing more of the hair shaft, allowing it to be cut shorter.

Tip: Stretching the skin by manipulating the facial muscles also tones and tightens the muscles, reducing wrinkling and prolonging a youthful appearance.

Take your time! Nobody ever won a trophy for being the fastest shaver. Careful diligence will always result in a better shave, both in terms of comfort and closeness. With time and repeated practice you will get faster. Once you have mastered the tools and developed a sound technique based on your individual needs and desires, your morning shave will generally take about 7-10 minutes How to Use Your Double-Edge Razor



£100 Edwin Jagger Set
From <http://www.thegroovedman.co.uk>

But be forewarned, if you don't take the time to learn how to properly use your new Double-Edge Safety Razor you will be no more satisfied with the results than you have been in the past. Putting the finest tools in the hands of an inexperienced workman will not elevate him from apprentice to journeyman. Only experience can do that.



BE A BETTER GENTLEMAN.

A beginners guide, How to be a better Gentleman with there 15 easy steps.

Truth walks side by side with men, and so does falsity. Being a gentleman is not necessarily about looking like one. Lead by example that means being considerate of others and talk about things that people can relate to like the economy etc.

When talking to a girl, give her your undivided attention. And if she has something to add to the conversation, listen to her.

Being a gentleman is not necessarily about looking like one. Lead by example that means being considerate of others and talk about things that people can relate to like the economy etc.

This shows interest of people in their immediate surroundings. When talking to a girl, give her your undivided attention. And if she has something to add to the conversation, listen to her.

CREATED BY TOM LOWNDES

- 1
- Good hygiene is a must. Make sure to bathe and groom yourself regularly. When applying deodorant or cologne, **don't** use a lot. Some girls may not like the smell and if you reek of it they're not going to be pleased. Also, make sure you don't use too much hair gel (it's sticky and goes rock hard after a while).
- 2
- Pay attention to how you look. Wear clothes that fit your body well, eliminate flashy clothing and avoid fashion "faux pas" (i.e. Baseball hats cocked slightly to the side). A simpler wardrobe will keep the emphasis on you, not your clothes, which will change your outlook.
- 3
- A true gentleman is polite to everyone, in action and words. Always be aware of how you can help people. Wait an extra few seconds to hold the door for the person behind you. Offer to help an old or pregnant person get their grocery bags to the car. You don't have to be paranoid or risk killing yourself (i.e if you've got a precarious grip on something heavy, don't open the door for someone) but respect is paramount. Even if someone is being stupid, be polite and respectful.
- 4
- Be prepared to ask questions or make statements of courtesy, like "how was your day?", "May I help you?", Or "let me get that for you", or "I'll take care of that".
- 5
- Don't swear. Ever. Don't speak of vulgar matter. If it's too difficult to stop cursing all-together, tone it down a lot.
- 6
- In public, don't: fart, belch, speak too loudly, be overly demanding/offensive, or drink heavily. A gentleman is always in control of himself, body and mind.
- 7
- Don't talk about yourself much. On the other hand, girls like to know a little bit about you so they can understand what you are talking about sometimes. In addition to making you a much more desirable conversationalist, it will make you seem more mysterious to not share too much, which many women find attractive. Get a basic idea of what's going on in music, sports, and politics.
- 8
- Learn to either avoid politics and religion until you know someone better, and learn how to be neutral if someone else brings it up. A simple shrug will do wonders. A gentleman doesn't make other people uncomfortable. Be Courteous to Women

- 9
- Don't stare at and ogle women or say anything degrading to or about them. It's never a good idea to objectify a woman (or anyone else, for that matter).
- 10
- Give women a little extra respect. Don't be obsequious, but neofeminism has kind of gotten rid of some basic politeness that they'll appreciate, such as opening car/building doors, etc. Don't put every women on a pedestal (we're all human), but they'll really appreciate it if you do them favours, like giving up your seat on the bus even though they're not carrying anything heavy.
- 11
- There are some things you shouldn't talk to women about. These include how hot other women are, or anything at all of that nature. If she's not into sports or video games, you can say a few things but then move on to something she's into. Women tend to be more interested in books and music than in sports and video games, though there are plenty of exceptions to every rule. It's fine to talk about that stuff with your guy friends, but a gentleman doesn't do that.
- 13
- When walking on the sidewalk or on the side of the road, gentlemen should walk on the outside(closer to the road), whereas the women should be on the inside, protected from oncoming traffic.
- 12
- Stand up for your women. Don't go around punching everyone who looks at her sideways, but if anyone is giving her looks or unwanted advances, intervene. Put your arm around her shoulder and move yourselves away, or go to her and speak up for her. The physical contact reassures her and lets the aggressor know that he's got to deal with both of you.
- 14
- Do not talk down to women ever. It's okay to tease but being cruel is not the way to go. Teasing does not mean calling them vulgar words, however. No matter how joking your tone is, it hurts a woman when a so-called "gentleman" calls them a dirty word.
- 15
- Pay attention to the fact that the world is more threatening for girls: they're automatically targets at night or in bad neighbourhoods. Walk her to her door (or car) if at all possible. It doesn't matter how strong she actually is, if you're a girl people will go at you first, whereas by virtue of being male you're safer. If your girl has to park far away from her dorm or home, always offer to drive her to and from your destination. She will appreciate how caring you are about her safety.
Respect Your Girlfriend

GROWING A MANLY BEARD

Growing a beard is an affirmation of manliness and masculinity. The beard itself is a physical characteristic that separates men from the boys, girls, and women. In our culture that has down played

good old-fashioned masculinity, growing a beard shows that you are not afraid of being a manly man. You can reclaim a too-often-lost aspect of manliness by growing a beard.

How to Grow a Beard

Go ahead. Break free from the shaving trap and grow a beard. If you are ready to step up to the challenge of growing a beard, it is time to start growing. The key to a successful beard-growing effort is commitment. Just make a decision to grow a beard and stick with it. Do not be swayed by naysayers or lapses in your own confidence. Do not let a transient period of itching send you running for the razor. Just make a commitment to grow the beard and stick with it. Make it nonnegotiable and always remember that. It helps to set a commitment date. Be sure that you allow yourself at least six weeks. Then, stick to your resolution not to cave and shave prior to your commitment date.

It can often be helpful to choose a bearded role model to serve as a source of inspiration while growing your beard. This could be someone you know or it could be a famous or historic bearded figure. While growing your beard, if at any time your commitment and confidence falter, just remember your bearded role model and realize that he successfully grew his beard and realize that you can, too.

Self-consciousness is often heightened during the initial beard-growing phase. Do not worry about it! Man up! Be proud that you are asserting your right to grow a beard for all to see. If self-consciousness is tough for you, try starting the beard while away on a vacation or holiday break. When you return to your regular environment, remember your commitment. Do not be shaken by the reactions of others. After all, it is your decision, not theirs. It also helps to take positive comments as supportive statements while disregarding negative comments as being irrelevant.

Picking a Beard Style

You will likely wonder which style of beard will best suit you. There is no need to make a hasty decision. You might think that you should find out what the latest fashion trends are and make your choice of beard style accordingly. Forget that. Growing a beard should never be about fashion. Growing a beard is about being yourself. It is about being a man. Grow the beard that you want without giving fashion any thought.

There will be one controlling factor in selecting the proper beard style for you. That would be genetics and the amount and configuration of beard development you have been dealt. The main rule here is to make the best of what you

have. While a beard is definitely a manly thing, the ability to grow a beard varies widely among men. Some men have abundant and profuse beard growth, while others have little or even none. Most men find themselves somewhere in between. Those with scant beard-growth potential are no less manly. Let me be clear about that. The amazing variability in beard-growing ability is just one of the mysteries of the beard. The beard is a gift and gifts differ among men. Those who have the gift of the beard should share that gift by growing the beard for all to see.

For those who are physically able, I highly recommend growing the full beard. The full beard is the classic style, the iconic beard image. If you cannot produce the full beard, choose a style that makes the best use of your beard-growth pattern, be it the goatee, the chin curtain, the chin strip, or another variation.

Whichever beard style you choose, be sure not to make the most common mistake in beard-growing: premature shaping. For most beginning beard growers, it is preferable just to stop shaving altogether and let everything grow for the first four weeks or so. For many, the scruffy look during this period is too hard to bear and they yield to the temptation to clean up the look by defining a shape to the beard. The trouble is that early attempts at shaping frequently result in too much of the beard being taken off — going too high up for the neck line or going down too low on the cheek line. The resulting awkwardly-shaped beard usually does not look right and often gets discarded as a failed-attempt at growing a beard. If you really cannot afford to stick it out and avoid premature shaping, at least approach your shaping effort with the objective of taking off too little rather than too much.

Itch Relief

Many a new beard has been sacrificed for the desire for relief from itching. Do not let itching deny you your beard! After being accustomed to shaving for so long, the growth of a beard presents your skin with a new environment. Sometimes it causes a period of itchiness. Do not give up because of this. Keep growing, knowing that the itchiness should pass as your skin gets used to the presence of your beard. Remember your commitment! Meanwhile, you can soothe your itchy skin with a moisturizing lotion or other skin-care products that are used to relieve itching.

How To Care for a Beard

As your beard grows into a real beard, you will need to learn how to care for your beard. Many guys take charge of their own beard maintenance, not trusting the care of their beards to anyone else.

It can be tough these days to find a barber who really knows his stuff when it comes to beard trimming. If you cannot find a barber who is sufficiently trustworthy to trim your beard, buy a beard trimmer and learn to use it. Most men find that maintaining a beard is much easier than daily shaving.

Growing a beard is an adventure that can be a surprising process of self-discovery. And it certainly is a manly thing to do. It's even manlier to grow a beard and keep it. A recent comment sent in to beards.org puts it nicely: "Beards are just the best way to live life." For all the information, support, and inspiration that you might need to make your beard-growing adventure a success.

Visit <http://www.beards.org/>

“Growing a beard is an affirmation of manliness and masculinity”

MEN'S FASHION MUST HAVES

The Things Every Man Should Have In His Wardrobe.

We're always wondering what to wear, but looking for those perfectly matching colours and styles for every occasion seems to be such a hassle. We never actually stop and question ourselves on the basics of men's fashion. What are men's fashion must-haves anyhow? These nuts and bolts of men's fashion are the foundation of our everyday.

Men's fashion essentials will incontestably vary in price and style according to a man's given age, income bracket, work environment, and personal style, but rarely will the actual list's substance vary from what we've compiled hereinafter. Read the following list and take note of which fashion items are missing from your wardrobe.



Suit

Every man needs at least one well-tailored suit for whatever special events he'll be attending. Even if it's a "once a year" occasion, it's embarrassing to feel out of place and look like a cheapskate without a suit.

If you need only one suit, buy a classic black or gray single breasted suit. Ask your salesperson for a classic cut that won't go out of style. That way you'll only need to change your shirt and tie to keep your look fresh and up-to-date.

Blue/White Button-Down Shirt

A dressy white shirt is a must-have for suits and/or dressy pants for more formal occasions. It's a classic article that will never go out of style. (If you're a banker, you'll have to wear a blue or white button-down shirt every working day of your life)

One Magnificent Tie

A tie is a fashion essential because it complements the suit. Although you should have a variety of ties, you should always purchase at least one new, sensational tie per year because tie trends change frequently.

This will force you to change your look on a regular basis (assuming you don't wear suits that often). But if you wear suits every day, you should buy a trendy tie every season. That way you'll be in style and look sharp every time you wear a suit, as it will allow you to accumulate a nice collection of diverse ties in the process.

Black Shoes, Black Belt

One of the biggest fashion no-nos is to mismatch the colour of your belt with that of your shoes. Wearing black shoes and a black belt is a fashion fundamental and will bail you out for any occasion, whether it's casual or formal. If your budget for fashion goods is rather low, buy at least one pair of black leather shoes and a black leather belt.

Classic black shoes will last you at least a year or two while a black belt will most likely last you a lifetime. Finally, make sure you wear your black shoes and black belt together and don't forget to sport black socks.



NETWORK IN PERSON

It's 2012, so we've all mastered the finer points of social networking, right? But in an age of personal-brand-building, it's easy to forget that networking in person is one of the most beneficial (not to mention affordable) ways to market yourself. After all, it's the genuine, personal connections that make an impact—not the random LinkedIn requests.

Normal wear

Jeans

Blue jeans are embedded in American culture, and are trousers each and every guy has in his wardrobe. They look good when they're brand new and even when they're somewhat worn out. Blue jeans are versatile and comfortable, and can easily be combined with dressier shoes, sneakers, sandals, or loafers to make for a great sporty look.

White T-Shirt

The Bruce Willis "blue jeans and white T-shirt" look is what men worldwide should be aiming for when not at work. The white T-shirt and blue jeans ensemble is an extremely simple genre that looks great while remaining comfortable.

It's probably the only combination that you'll be able to wear every day of the week without anybody noticing it (this doesn't imply that you only need one shirt and one pair of jeans buy several).

One Favourite Sweater

Every man has one sweater that he'll wear again and again, regardless of how many times it's been worn. Make sure you have at least one favourite sweater handy that makes you feel good and bails you out when you can't figure out what to wear. Many types of sweaters exist, so if you don't know which one might look good on you or even suit your style best, read up on the different types of sweaters available.

A good pair of chinos

Simply because they will make you look good.

Simple white sneakers

They could be canvas like some Supergas or leather like Common Projects, and don't worry if they get a little dirty.

Leather wallet

A leather wallet is a must-have fashion accessory that every man should own. It's practical, enduring and will look great in both formal and casual occasions. A black or brown leather wallet is also a sure bet because it blends perfectly with most of your attire, and is a classic that will never go out of style. I personally recommend the Brown Hartmann Leather Billfolds or the Black Hartmann Leather Billfolds.

Watch

We've said it before and we'll say it again, a watch is the only piece of jewellery any man really needs. A timepiece, like shoes, can say a lot about a man's personality and fashion sense.

If you're limited to one watch, make sure it's one that can be worn both during formal and not-so-formal occasions - like the Seiko Le Grand Sport . Like anything else, I strongly suggest that you buy the best quality product you can afford, to avoid having to worry about it for a while.

Take note of the fashion essentials you're missing and shop for them. Have a great week and remember to keep on stylin'.

Sneakers

You probably already own a pair of sneakers for workouts or to wear with your favourite blue jeans. Wearing nice-looking sneakers with jeans or any other type of sporty pants looks amazing, not to mention that it's extremely comfortable. Buy at least one pair of new sneakers a year.

White T-shirt

Not a boxy shaped "beefy" tee, and not one of those skimpy drape-y deals either. Yuck. My "Jake" T-shirt fits in the arms and traces your body's shape.

Confidence is key.

A proper introduction calls for a firm handshake, eye contact and a smile. A good attitude is contagious. It makes it easier to bring up what you're passionate about, and it makes them actually want to listen to what you have to say. And remember to dress the part. What you're wearing is essentially the first impression you give someone, even before you open your mouth.

Practice makes perfect.

Of course, it helps to be an outgoing person, but networking is a skill that can be perfected. Ask a buddy to help you out—have him or her turn to you at unexpected times and play the part of the person you're hoping to speak with. If you can tune out distractions and get your point across succinctly, you're good to go.

Ditch the sales pitch

Just go for a natural conversation. Show interest in the other person by asking questions about them. This will create authentic opportunities for you to bring up what you do (and what you're looking to do).

Keep it short and sweet.

Nobody wants to be cornered and you don't want to be remembered for commandeering someone's time. This is mingling, so keep the conversation light but relevant. After 15 minutes you should know whether or not this is someone you'll want to follow up with.

And then follow up

If things went well, you likely exchanged contact info or swapped business cards. Make sure to follow-up the day or two after, with a quick email or note reminding them of your conversation and what you can do for them. This is your opportunity to briefly outline your potential in whatever goal you're looking to accomplish, be it a job opening or collaboration.



PAPER

Long a relic of Victorian Era gentleman, calling cards are making a resurgence.

THE PERFECT CUP

For most of us, a good cup of coffee is a critical component to our morning and daily routine. Doma Coffee takes “good” to the next level—going to the extreme end of fair trade and placing a huge emphasis on sustainability. It’s certified organic, fair trade and is purchased through direct relationships with the communities that grow these amazing beans.

On the sustainability side, Doma uses all ultra high efficiency lighting and prints all materials with nontoxic vegetable based inks on recycled paper. With all that said, their coffee is exceptional. We’ve been enjoying The Chronic and La Bicicleta for the last month and have sworn off the more mainstream swill to which we’d been mildly addicted.

Both roasts were smooth, full bodied with a nice strong flavour and none of the bitter or burnt taste you often find at the corporate coffee joints. Pick up a pound or two and brew it using Doma’s preferred method: the pour-over. Brewed one at a time and slow-dripped right into your mug. The perfect cup of coffee doesn’t necessarily require more time, just more attention.

The enthusiasm and curiosity, which is what we ask of our chefs: cooking isn’t stuck in 1990, or we would still be sitting down to menus with honey-mustard glaze and sun-dried tomatoes. Why should coffee be any different?

Really, the question is, why do so many people think coffee is Italian? Or French? Or Turkish? Why fixate on a notion of authenticity so tied to a particular country that nothing else could measure up? I thought about this when I followed the lead of the professionals and started buying gear — a grinder, a drip cone, a pouring kettle — that was simple, functional and beautiful. They were low-tech, high-fidelity gadgets that cost \$15 to \$50 and changed how I make coffee. For the most part, the key components came from Japan.

One of the most important coffee markets in the world, Japan imports more than 930 million pounds of it each year - more than France, less than Italy. It’s not a fad. There are coffee shops in Japan that date to at least the 1940s and traditions that reach back



even further; it’s a culture that prizes brewed coffee over espresso (although that’s changing) and clarity over body. Coffee is as Japanese as baseball and beer. Until just a few years ago, much of the coffee gear that made it to the United States from Japan was brought here in suitcases. It wasn’t contraband, just obscure, a trickle of kettles and cones picked up by coffee obsessives or their well travelled friends who didn’t mind lugging the extra bulk.

One adopter — and importer — of Japanese gear was James Freeman of Blue Bottle Coffee in Oakland, San Francisco and now Brooklyn. Freeman and his wife, the pastry chef Caitlin Williams Freeman, recounted a visit to Chatei Hatou, a Tokyo coffee shop where brewing coffee isn’t exactly a ceremony but is ceremonious. They said beans were weighed, ground, emptied into a filter and preinfused with a little bit of water that let the coffee bloom and release carbon dioxide. Cups and saucers were warmed, a slice of chiffon cake was set in the fridge to firm up. Only then was the coffee brewed, slowly.

“They’re going for a mastery of technique, then a mastery over all the important details of service,” Freeman said. “It adds up to an incredibly elusive experience. It’s hard to manufacture splendridness. It seems as though they have something very difficult figured out.”

In 2007, Freeman started paying close attention to the swan-neck kettles used for filter coffee. The narrow spout produces a thin, precise stream, and the handle brings your hand into a naturally balanced position — instead of flooding the filter and letting it drip, you deliver a measured amount of water over a period of several minutes. It might sound precious or tedious, but the control is enthralling. It’s like picking up a drafting pen after only writing with Magic Markers. More important, the coffee tastes different. The flavours can be distinctive and bright, even sweet. A “bean” is really the fermented seed of a cherrylike shrub, and if coffee is roasted carefully and brewed correctly, you can taste the flower and the fruit.

By 2009, pouring kettles and other gear were stocked by Blue Bottle Coffee and other independent shops like Ritual Coffee Roasters in San Francisco, Intelligentsia in Chicago and Los Angeles and Barismo in Arlington, Mass. The supply was inconsistent — unlike the planned scarcity of limited-edition sneakers. If store ran out of what you wanted, you went back until a shipment came in. It took commitment to join the club. Owning something made by Hario, Kalita or Bonmac was proof of membership.

That all changed in the fall of 2010. Williams-Sonoma started to carry a selection of specialty brewing equipment and accessories from Hario, a glass-manufacturing giant that’s the Pyrex of Japan. Not only does Williams-Sonoma sell a pouring kettle, grinder and filter cone, it also carries the more unusual slow drippers and wood necks. The rollout was nationwide. The Japanese coffee gear is stocked at most of the company’s stores, more than 250 locations in all, and on williams-sonoma.com. Now picking up a pouring kettle is as easy as swinging through the Mall at Green Hills in Nashville.

The kettle is the “pour” part of “pour over,” which these days is the accepted term for the technique, although Jaime van Schyndel, one of the owners of Barismo, prefers “hand pour,” which may describe it better: coffee made by hand, usually one cup at a time. To be frank, it’s not for everybody. Some will enjoy the ritual. But others will always consider coffee a convenience, a button to push or, once you learn how to set the timer, one that clicks on automatically. I have no doubt that countless pouring kettles and slow drippers will be used three or four times, then boxed back up and put on a high shelf, the fondue sets of our day.

But the sudden rise and widening acceptance of what was unfamiliar marks a permanent shift. The hierarchy has been shattered. Already, a few of the same people who once travelled to Tokyo and Kyoto are now talking and posting on Twitter about a country that draws on a variety of traditions, an emerging coffee culture that might also have something to teach us, Korea.



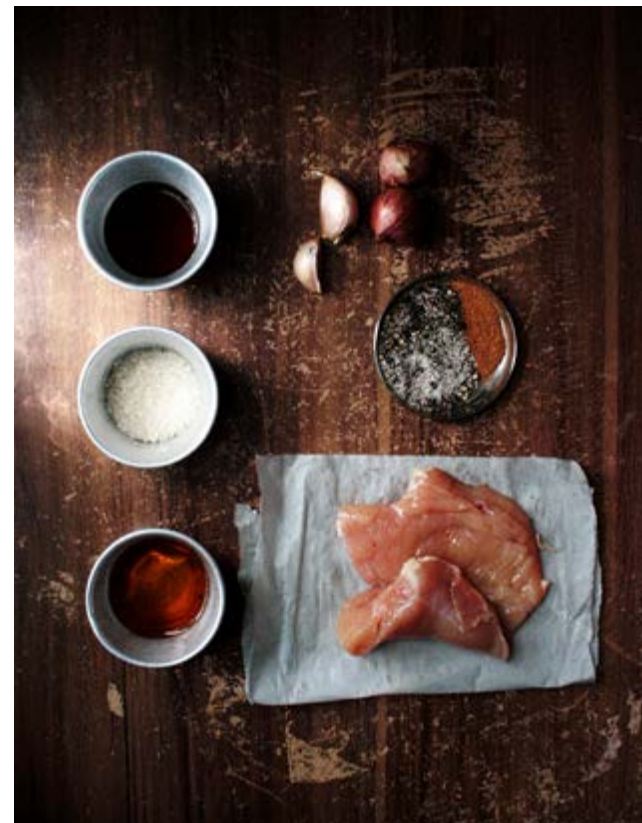
GRILLED CHICKEN BANH MI

I've never tasted daikon (I stared at it for too long and it reminded me of the radish spirit in Spirited Away) or even had a banh mi, for that matter, so I'm pretty glad someone made this food wish. So here it is, as requested by Anon - I hope it doesn't disappoint. To address the woes of the

use of sesame buns, here is an apology from yours truly. The recipe did say to use baguettes but there were none that day in the supermarket (shocking, I know) and so I thought this would make a suitable substitute. Apparently I was wrong - it won't happen again. Proceed for recipe:

GRILLED CHICKEN BANH MI

(Original recipe from Food Wolf)



5 SPICE GRILLED CHICKEN:

[2 boneless, skinless chicken breast (or thighs, if that's what you prefer) + 1 1/2 tablespoon soy sauce + 2 garlic cloves, minced + 2 shallots, sliced thinly + 1/2 tablespoon fish sauce + 1 teaspoon sugar + 1/2 teaspoon 5 spice powder] OPTIONAL: Salt & pepper Mix all the ingredients except the chicken and put into a ziploc bag. Add chicken and turn to coat. Let marinade at room temperature for 30 minutes - 1 hour. Meanwhile, make the pickled vegetables:

PICKLED CARROTS & DAIKON:

[1/4 cup sugar + 1/4 cup distilled white vinegar + 1/8 teaspoon salt + 1 cup daikon, cut into matchstick-size pieces + 1 cups carrot, cut into matchstick-size pieces] OPTIONAL: 1/2 teaspoon dried red chilli pepper flakes. Whisk first 3 ingredients in a large bowl until dissolved. Add daikon and carrots; toss to coat. Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes to 1 hour.



While you're waiting for the chicken to marinate and the carrots and daikon to pickle, prepare the rest of the ingredients for the banh mi.



ASSEMBLE WITH:

[2-3 tablespoons of your favourite mayonnaise + 1-2 teaspoons of Sriracha hot sauce + 1 cucumber + a handful of cilantro sprigs + 2 6-inch baguettes or rolls] Combine the mayonnaise with the sriracha sauce and set aside. Slice the cucumber thinly and give the cilantro a good rinse and set aside. Brush the bread with a little olive oil and grill the bread until just toasted.



THE CHICKEN & PICKLED VEGETABLES:

Preheat Broiler. Cook chicken approx. 6-minutes per side. Check that meat isn't pink inside before removing from heat. Transfer to plate; tent with foil to keep the meat warm. When ready to serve, slice. After the time has lapsed, drain the carrots and daikon well and set aside.

SANDWICH MIS-EN-PLACE:

[Toasted bread + spicy mayonnaise + sliced cucumbers + 5 spice grilled chicken + pickled vegetables + cilantro sprigs] Spread spicy mayonnaise on bottom half of bread. Top with cucumber slices. Fill sandwich with the meat of one chicken breast (or thigh, if that's what you have), drained daikon and carrot and cilantro sprigs.

Enjoy!

Pigamitha Dimar

[Http://peegaw.tumblr.com](http://peegaw.tumblr.com)



IMAGES BY PIGAMITHA DIMAR

BEGINNERS GUIDE TO WHISKY

OK, let's start with the basics. Your average dictionary might describe 'WHISKY' like:"A spirituous liquor distilled from a fermented mash of grains (rye, barley, wheat, corn, etc.). Matured in wooden casks, usually for three years or more.

Inferior grades are produced from potatoes, beets, or other roots. Scotch whisky takes its dry, somewhat smoky

Flavour from the barley malt, cured with peat, used in its preparation. The relatively similar Irish whiskey, for which no peat is used, has a sweeter taste. American whiskeys are classified as rye or bourbon. Canadian whiskey is produced from cereal grain only. First distilled in monasteries in 11th century England, whisky has been produced commercially since the 16th century."

Well, it seems that your average dictionary writer doesn't get out much...There's so much more to whisky than can be described in a single simple paragraph. What's more - that last part about the origins of whisky might not be completely true...When the first whisky was distilled is still being debated; probably in the 15th century. The same is true for the actual birthplace of Uisge Beatha (= Gaelic for 'the water of life').England seems rather unlikely; Ireland or Scotland are more obvious candidates.

whiskies, but few of them had the individuality and character that I love in single malt whiskies. Individuality and character are not appreciated by everybody though.

When I was younger (and dumber) I still thought that 'What is the best whisky?' Was a sensible question. I've since learned that it's not - at least not in terms of some scientifically measurable way. However, there are flavour profiles and some whiskies are more popular than others. If many peat heads love a certain bottling, chances are that other peat lovers would appreciate that expression as well. But don't just take my word for the superiority of malt whisky. Why don't you make an informed decision by yourself? Just compare an Irish or American whiskey (or perhaps even a grain whisky or a blended Scotch) to one or more of the Scottish single malts mentioned in chapter 7. You won't be bored by the experience, I promise - provided you take your time and pay attention. If you've never tried a single malt whisky before and your first encounter is with the Laphroaig 10 years old, you're in for a big surprise, and I can't guarantee it'll be a pleasant one. You'll either love it or hate it, there's no 'middle of the road'. But wait a minute! We're getting ahead of ourselves once again...

We have nine more chapters to go. So, check out the next chapter on 'vocabulary' for the proper whisky language. Under the mistaken impression that these pages would be read only by intelligent beings, I felt like cheering up the (sometimes slightly boring) theoretical information with a few fanciful (but not factual) stories. I just assumed that everybody would be able to distinguish between cold, hard facts and my warped wit, but then I received a message from a reader from South America who wanted to know if the book 'Distillation for Fun & Profit' was available as a facsimile edition or reprint. No it's not - because I made the whole thing up.

It was a 'colourful illustration' of the early days, if you will. The same goes for the 18th century photograph of the distillery, by the way - photography wasn't actually invented at the time (and I think they still wore wigs). To check out the rest of the guide go to,

[Http://www.maltmadness.com/](http://www.maltmadness.com/)

The most popular theory has some Irish monks hopping across the Irish Sea to Scotland (at the end of the first millennium) to spread the gospel along with the secret of distillation among the barbarians. However, these Irish monks didn't invent distillation itself; it was discovered by an Persian scholar named Rhazes. (These days alcohol is frowned upon in the region.)

These days, whisky is produced all over the world. You can find whisky distilleries in Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, Canada, the US, Australia, New-Zealand, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, Spain, Turkey, India, Pakistan, South Korea, Thailand, Japan, Taiwan, Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela and even South Africa. The focus of the 'Malt Madness' site is on Scotch (single malt) whisky, so he Distillery Data section only contains information on +/- 125 malt whisky distilleries in Scotland. Those of you interested in the (malt) spirits produced in other countries can find more details in the Lex-icon on Malt Maniacs (distillery information) and the 'Deviant Drams' section (whiskies).

The earliest forms of whisky were most likely distilled from ale or beer. They were not matured in any way, so in those early days it probably tasted more like vodka than whisky.

Barley is the only type of grain used for the production of Scottish and Irish single malt whisky. The alcohol percentage (ABV) of Scotch whisky has to be at least 40%. This is a minimum ABV set by British law.

Appreciating Whisky (Phillip Hills) Malt Whisky Yearbook (various writers) Malt Whisky Companion (Michael Jackson) Malt Whisky; A Liquid History (Charles Maclean) Advanced Beginner's Guide (Johannes v/d Heuvel)

It's not because Irish or American whiskeys are 'inferior' in any way. Actually, I've tasted a few that put most Scottish malts to shame. It's just a matter of personal taste, really. Over the years I've come to taste some great American 'bourbon' and Irish





WHY WET SHAVING?

A Better Shave

I discovered Wet Shaving while looking for a way to deal with a tough and troublesome beard. Wet Shaving is not about being snobbish, but about a better shave with less irritation and fewer ingrown hairs. A double-edge classic safety razor, like Merkur HD Classic, won't pull the hairs and cut them below the skin level as is the case with multi-blade cartridges, taking better care of your skin and your beard. Also, with an old style razor you have the luxury of choosing the sharpness of the blade ; so you can find the one that fits you best.

A Morning Ritual

Shaving used to be a hated task for me. I couldn't wait until the weekend to skip a couple of days. Now I look forward to this little routine. And why? I've replaced aerosol cans and disposable razors with a double edge razor, a good shaving soaps and a pure badger shaving brushes. Three simple elements that are not only able to give me a better shave, but that put together create a moment to unwind and do something for myself that I can enjoy and feel good about.

Elements of a Great Shave

The secret to wet-shaving is getting yourself a good double-edge razor, shaving soap or cream and a shaving brush. Different people prefer different razors and with time you will find the one that works best for you. For starters a medium size safety razor will do the job; Merkur Progress being the best deal in my opinion. I prefer shaving soaps over creams because they have fewer preservatives and last longer. The shaving brush is the pivotal element of wet-shaving. So if you get to pick only one outstanding shaving prop, this has got to be it. The brush will massage and exfoliate your skin and the motion required to apply the soap will also lift your hair, preparing if for the shave. For a scrubber feeling try a brush made of pure or best badger, for a soft touch super badger or silver tip will do the trick.

ANATOMY OF A CLASSIC

The Skyliner

Some of best inventions are born out of necessity, other are simply by accident. In the case of Eddie Bauer's famed Skyliner—the world's first quilted down jacket—you could say it was a little of both. An avid outdoors men, Bauer was trekking through western Washington's Olympic Peninsula when his bulky, waterlogged wool coat became too heavy and he was forced to take it off. "I was climbing a very steep hill when I started to get sleepy," he recalled to the New York Times in 1981. "I reached to touch my back and it was ice. I realized I was freezing to death." Bauer almost died on that mountain, but it was that brush with hypothermia that inspired him to create a jacket that was both warm and wearable. The goal was to make it as lightweight as possible.

He'd heard about down clothing used by the Russian Army, so he bought a \$25 bushel of goose down and started experimenting. It certainly insulated body heat but it was also lumpy and bulky. To tame the fluff, he added quilting. A ribbed collar and cuffs aided in keeping out chilly winds. A heavy-duty zipper finished it off and the Skyliner was officially debuted to the public in 1936. It revolutionized outerwear for the sporting set and soon became the first patented down jacket in the United States.

To celebrate the jacket's 75th anniversary, Bauer's namesake brand is reissuing the jacket, which was discontinued in 1995. Launching today: a limited edition run of 75 numbered replicas of the original Skyliner, faithfully reconstructed to the smallest details, filled with high-quality goose down and packaged in a commemorative wooden box. Of course, that kind of exclusivity comes at a premium. But thankfully, they're also offering a standard reissue for the rest of us that costs just \$150. 75th Anniversary Skyliner, \$500, at Eddie Bauer and Barneys stores

Icons that are as stylish today as when they were first produced.



YOUR WEEKEND WASH BAG



As we enter the season of the regular weekend break, it's time for a wash bag audit. Here are five essentials to make sure you have everything covered on your next weekend away.

The Moisturiser

Naturally when you're away you tend to spend more time outside than you would during a normal work day. Hailing from a part of the world where sunshine is a given, Baxter of California's Super Shape SPF 15 uses vitamins C and E to neutralise free radicals while UVA/UVB filters provide robust protection from the sun, whether you're on the beach or in a beer garden. (£20, Niven & Joshua)

The Wash bag

You're going to need something to transport your essentials on a regular basis, so consider your wash bag purchase an investment. A good quality wash bag is something you should never have to replace, an ideal embraced by Canadian leather goods brand WANT less Essentials de la Vie. Their wash bags are not only well made and technically astute, but stylish to the point of envy. This particular combination of recycled cotton and cognac leather makes for a perfect lightweight travel companion. (£170, Niven & Joshua)

The Razor

Once you have visited the world of Double-Edged Safety razor shaving, it's very unlikely that you'll want to go back. The razor is the most important part of your shaving routine, and this travel safety razor from Merkur is a great way for you to carry your favourite blades with you while in transit. A favourite of soldiers for its ability to be stripped down and cleaned, the Merkur travel razor is another reason to leave your cartridge razor at home. (£25, Shaving Shack)

The Shaving Kit

The key to shaving is routine, and there are four elements – Pre-Shave, Shave Cream, Brush and Aftershave Balm – to a good shave that you're unlikely to be find in even the most lavish of hotel rooms.

Luxury shaving brand eShave have put together a travel kit comprising of these high quality shaving essentials, including the elusive travel size version of a Badger hair brush. The eShave Verbena Lime Travel Kit has everything you need for a close shave on-the-go, all embellished with a refreshing twist of lime. (£35, Niven & Joshua)

The Fragrance

The luxury Edition of Chanel's Allure Homme range, Edition Blanche, has a scent that transitions perfectly from day to night as it develops on your skin. The lighter notes of Black and Pink Madasacar pepper carry you through the morning, with Sicilian Lemon and Bergamot coming to the fore in time lunch, finishing off with the deep yet sweet Vanilla and Cedar wood combination for after dark. (£46, House of Fraser)

TIPS

Does Your Suit Fit?

What can make a £300 suit look like a million bucks and a £5,000 look like garbage? The fit. It doesn't matter if your suit is wool, cotton or linen, the fit is always the most important thing about how a suit looks. Here's how to get the right one (and how much you should expect to pay for it).

Shoulders

Too big and they'll slope, too snug and they'll wrinkle and bunch. The jacket's shoulder should hug your body's shoulder. When buying suits, try going down a size to ensure a snug fit—you don't want to have this part altered.

Chest

You should just be able to slip your hand under your jacket while it's buttoned. Any more room (say, a fist's worth) and your jacket is too loose. Have the sides taken in. The nipped waist will broaden your shoulders and lengthen your torso—it should cost £30 to £40 at your tailor.

Sleeves

Your sleeve should stop just above the joint of your wrist, enabling you to flash a quarter-inch of cuff. And if you want your suit to fit like a magazine or catalogue model, then you'll want to have the sleeves taken in to proportionally fit your arms—a tailor will likely charge you from \$15 to \$20 per sleeve.



Pants

If you want a contemporary look to your suit, you want flat-front pants hemmed with very little break, allowing you to flash a bit of ankle. (Sid Mashburn will tell you no break is needed.) You may need to have the legs narrowed slightly as well—it'll run you anywhere from \$30 to \$50 for the both alterations.

FYI

Don't listen to the salesman who says "Buy it a little bigger, you'll have this for years." He's just setting you up to look bad.

Organize Your Closet

It's a new year and we're (slowly) transitioning from one season to the next. And a well organized closet will not only allow you to better know what you have, but it will make getting dressed in the morning easy and efficient.

Getting started

Take an inventory of what you have and what you wear. If you can't fit into something any longer or haven't worn it in over a year, you don't need to hang onto it. Donate it. If you've got three pairs of Chuck Taylors and only wear two, well, you know what to do.

The space issue

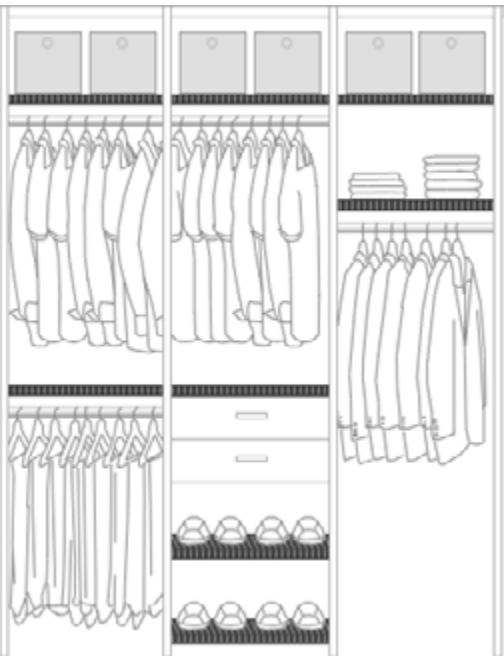
Not everyone is blessed with a walk-in closet. Store out-of-season items out of the way so that everything isn't stuffed and piled on top of one another. Just make sure the clothes are clean before they're boxed up

Like goes with like

This is a big one for closet organizers. Everything has a place. Choose a grouping system that works for you—we suggest by type (button downs, T-shirts, jackets, sweaters—and then by colour if you really want to know your options instantly.

Know when to fold 'em

While you should hang anything that might wrinkle easily, you can fold and stack items like T-shirts, sweaters and jeans. Try to avoid making any stack higher than six items. Keep ties, scarves and watches orderly and dust-free in a drawer.

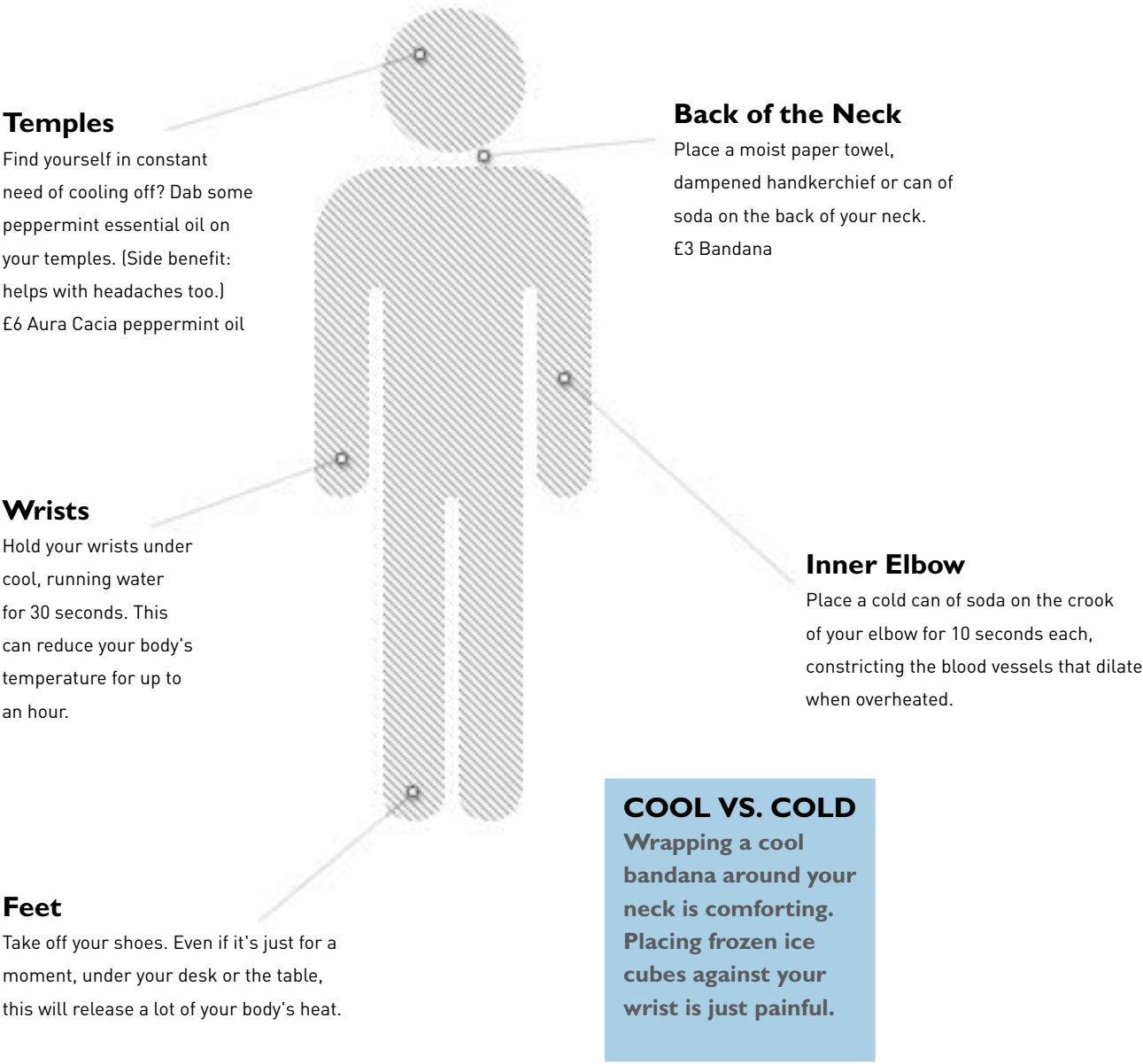


Summer survival skills

Wiping sweat away will only cause you to sweat even more. Want to stop sweating? Stand in front of a fan or an open window and let the sweat evaporate naturally.

How to Cool Off Quickly

Everyone’s been there: stuck in a stuffy office or a crowded restaurant. Perhaps your AC is out or you just got in from a sweltering walk back from lunch. The key to the quick cool down? Focus on your pulse points. According Dr. Lewis Maharam, a New York-based running physician who often treats overheated marathoners, the points are where your blood flows closest to the surface of your skin. As cooler blood circulates through your body, you’ll feel a slight chill wash over you. Herewith, a few hot spots and what to do for some relief from the heat.



Stop Sweat Stains

Just because its winter doesn’t mean you don’t sometimes end up with sweat stains. Blame it on layering or over-heated interiors. And besides being messy and malodorous, perspiration can be seen as nervousness. These are not the attributes you want when sitting across from the boss or worse, a date. Here are a few quick and easy ways to keep your pits dry.

Wear an undershirt. A grey v-neck won’t show through light coloured shirts as much as a traditional white one. Apply an antiperspirant before going to bed. The sweat ducts absorb the active ingredients so they won’t wash off in the morning shower and the aluminium salts responsible for those yellow stains won’t accumulate on shirts. Degree Adrenaline Series or Certain Dri are good options. Or stop the sweat entirely. Heavy sweaters can use a product like Sweat Block once a week or talk with a dermatologist about Botox injections.

Master Winter Scruff

Maybe it’s the freezing temps outside or the dry air inside, but shaving in the winter is a real drag. Whatever the reason, it feels like the appropriate time to forsake formality in favour of comfort. Case in point: The winter scruff. Some call it stubble, others call it laziness, but somewhere between your end-of-the-day five o’clock shadow and a legitimate beard is what you’re looking for.

HOW TO MAINTAIN IT

Winter scruff makes for a sharp look that plays up the angles of your face. And it’s easier to maintain than you might think. Simply find the length (and shaver setting) that works for you and go over the facial hair every three days or so. Keep your neck shaved from the top of the Adam’s apple on down. Once a week, soften and clean the hair by exfoliating your face.

£65 Braun Cruzer 6 Face Shaver
A sleek, waterproof 3-in-1 shaver with a wide head makes for a quick shave.



FYI
According to a Northumbria University at Newcastle study, women rated men with light stubble as the most attractive and masculine.

The Modern Man's Toolkit

You don’t need a red Craftsman toolshed in the garage to be able to fix things around the house. Even the most urbane of men should have these six simple (and inexpensive) essentials which will allow you the tackle most DIY jobs.

Tape Measure
Buy too cheap a tape measure and you’ll be cursing the repair before it even starts. This durable Stanley model is easy to use and won’t bend, crease or tear.

Hammer
Look for a lightweight fibreglass handle and a curved claw to make pulling nails easier.

Adjustable Wrench
You don’t need a bulky or fancy set of socket wrenches. This old school adjustable spanner will do the job.

4-in-1 Screwdriver
Again, no set is necessary. This all-in-one model will handle any screw driving need just fine. Make sure not to lose the tips.

FYI
A man should always start and finish a job in one sitting, and not start more than one job at a time.

Stanley Supply
You want it to have a three-position, retractable blade like this one. And you want to keep it clean and sharp.

Vise-Grips
Think of these as pliers that won’t give up, which come in handy more than you’d think.



