



## How to Handle the Holidays in Style

The holidays can be stressful between weather turning sour, relatives reheating some bad blood, and just about anything that involves traveling in the snow. So when you're fighting through the holiday scum and you find yourself with a wardrobe problem, you may just throw up your hands in defeat. Don't worry, holiday warrior, we're here to help with some advice on how to solve common winter clothing ailments.

### *My party suit has become a bit tight. What can I fix quickly?*

Having endured Thanksgiving, you may find your suit a little snugger than it was, especially if you don't wear it often. Don't worry, New Year's resolutions will take care of the little extra to love, but in the meantime, get yourself to a tailor.

When it comes to letting out clothes, a lot depends on how much material is inside to actually let out (what tailors call "seam allowance"). Trousers are the easiest things to alter – a tailor can let out your waist a couple of inches and change the hem quickly and cheaply. The bad news is if your jacket has gotten tougher to button. You can let out the waist if there's enough material, but the job can run you somewhere between \$50 and \$100.

For more info, see our posts on [common alterations](#), [how much alterations typically cost](#), and the [nitty gritty details of letting out clothes](#).

My friend invited me to an “ugly sweater party.” How can I go without looking, y’know, ugly?

Your friend is a monster because ugly sweater parties are the absolute worst and should be stopped. But I guess that will have to wait to next year. Instead of focusing on “ugly” as in embroidered reindeers, go for something just more ostentatiously wintery. Coming to the party in a Fair Isle or Apres Ski style sweater will assure everyone you got the memo and you won't need to rummage through a Goodwill to prove it.



### ***I have an emergency holiday stain, what can I do?***

The holidays are a time of revelry and you should approach them with the proper abandon, but sometimes one too many eggnogs lead to some pretty nasty stains. If you've stained something special, you'll want to bring it to a professional. We frequently recommend [RAVE FabriCARE](#) in Arizona because they're the best garment cleaner we know of (and they'll take mail-ins). [Most local dry cleaners, frankly, aren't that great.](#)

If it's something you're willing to take a chance on, however, you'll want to identify whether you have a water- or oil-based stains. Water-based stains can often be solved with a quick trip to the bathroom. Use some hand soap and pull, don't scrub, until the stain is lifted as best as you can get. The laundry machine can take care of the rest later. If you're really worried about it, pre-soak the garment overnight in some OxiClean before you wash it. Jesse has a [great guide on how to do so](#), and America's Test Kitchen explains [why OxiClean is better than other pre-treatment cleaners](#).

Oil-based stains, however, should be taken to a dry cleaner. Washing can just otherwise set in the damage. The best you can do in these cases is to gently blot out the stain with a cotton napkin as soon as it happens (again, never wipe or scrub) and find a dry cleaner you trust.

## *How do I avoid looking like a bum when traveling this season?*

Traveling is probably on your holiday docket, and it's possible you'll be heading straight from transit to your engagement. Prepare with the solid travel outfit of an OCBD, a textured sweater, and a pair of wool or corduroy trousers. If you're flying, wear your loafers or chukka boots to get out of that TSA line quickly. If you're not sure the formality of the engagement, bring a navy sport coat or brown tweed jacket. A good sport coat in a basic color will look great for almost any occasion. If you're going to be a guest somewhere, consider bringing along a Tide-to-Go pen – [they can be a great way to take care of emergency stains](#) (water-based ones, anyway).

We also have some posts on [how to travel for the holidays](#), suggestions on [what you may want to pack](#), and [travel tips from eight stylish men who travel frequently for work](#).



***I have no idea of the dress code for the event I'm invited to. What can I wear to look appropriate no matter what?***

If you're not sure of the dress code, it's hard to go wrong with a sport coat and some tailored trousers. Add an informal tie or a pocket square, but maybe not both. If you think the event is more low-key, you can dress down the tailored jacket with some jeans. Sport coats don't always look right with denim, **but it's doable if the clothes are cut in a certain way**. See the photo above from last year's **Drake's** lookbook for inspiration.

If you need more outfit suggestions, **we have a full guide on how you can dress for the holidays**. It covers almost any occasion, and spans everything from sport coats to dress outerwear to casual ensembles.

***I have a busy week of holiday parties between coworkers, family, and friends. What can I do to avoid wearing the same thing for all of them, but not drive myself nuts in outfit decision making?***

Pick one thing that can work for all outfits, such as a blazer or sweater, and design all your outfits around that (navy sport coats are tremendously useful in this regard because you can wear them often without anyone really noticing). It takes some of the guesswork out and your outfits will be different enough to avoid being bored. For example, let's say you have a favorite holiday cardigan. Try it done up with a coat and some trousers, or down with denim and boots. You should have enough variation to see you through the week's blitz of shindigs.

***My mom got me a present of a, uh, questionable piece of fashion. How can I respectfully address the matter?***

Your mother carried you in her womb for nine months and this is how you repay her? Kidding, kidding. If your family knows you're into clothing, then they'll probably think some clothing is a good gift, not knowing how you obsess over the details. Be calm and courteous, try it on, say it "doesn't quite fit right," and ask for that gift receipt. Holiday returns are nothing to be ashamed of. But really, unless it's something actually offensive, just keep it as a sign of love if not a sign of your personal taste (shoutout to the plum sweater in my closet still with the tags on from last Christmas).