

CHECKLIST: HOW TO BUY TROUSERS

_____ Step 1: Figure Your Size

If you already know your trouser size, you can skip this step. If not, most trousers are sized with a waist/inseam pair of numbers, which you can calculate this way:

_____ Measure your waist where the tops of your trousers sit — just above the belt, usually right between the belly button and hips. Round up to the next whole inch.

Waist Measurement: _____

_____ Measure the inside of your leg, starting at the inside of your thigh where it meets your crotch and measuring down to your heel. Do not wear shoes while taking this measurement.

Inseam Measurement: _____

These two combined give you your size for most ready-to-wear trousers. Sizes are usually listed with the two numbers separated by a dash, waist size first, as in “34-30” for pants with a thirty-four inch waist and a thirty inch inseam.

Men buying custom trousers may want to use a more detailed measurement guide that takes seat, thigh, outseam, and additional measurements into account, such as the one at [A Tailored Suit](#).

_____ Step 2: Identify the Trousers You Want

_____ Select a fabric

- o Worsted wool — dressy and flattering; typical of suit trousers
- o Wool flannel — thick, soft wool; traditional dress slack option
- o Tweed — coarse, hairy wool; more casual than worsted or flannel
- o Cotton twill — simple, sturdy, and cheap; typical for khakis and similar pants
- o Corduroy — soft, casual option with distinctive ridges
- o Denim — casual option only

_____ Choose a style of pleats/trouser front:

- o Plain front — no pleats; simplest style
- o Single pleats — one pleat on each trouser leg; comfortable for men with larger legs
- o Double pleats — two pleats per leg for maximum flexibility

_____ Choose a hem style:

- o Smooth hem — dressiest option
- o Cuffs — less dressy, but can be resized when they fray

o _____ Choose a support method:

- o Belt loops — most common option; designed for a belt
- o Suspender buttons — located inside the waist

Note: There’s never a reason to wear both a belt and suspenders. Most trousers will not have a way to attach both.

_____ Choose a color:

- o Dark gray, navy blue, or black — most formal business options
- o Light or medium gray — classic business option; slightly less formal
- o Dark browns and blues — Basic day-to-day business colors

- o Khaki — the classic business-casual option
- o Brighter colors or patterned trousers — casual/social wear only

The combination of fabric, pleats, hem, belt/suspender support, and color should narrow your trouser choices down nicely. You're much better-prepared for shopping if you can tell salespeople that you want "a pair of gray flannel plain-front trousers with cuffs that I can wear with suspenders" than if you say that you want "some dress slacks."

_____ Step 3: Pick Your Source

_____ Identify the kind of tailoring and construction you want:

- o Bespoke (completely custom made — most expensive option)
- o Made-to-measure (a pre-made pattern sized specifically to you)
- o Ready-to-wear (pre-sized off the rack; some stores do in-house adjustments)

_____ Select a type of store:

- o Department stores (Sears, Macy's, etc. — low prices, but limited selection/quality)
- o Menswear chains (Men's Wearhouse, Jos. A. Banks, etc. — wider selection and better in-house service/fitting)
- o Independent boutiques (unique selections; tend to have better service and quality)
- o Bespoke tailors (custom design and construction)
- o Online (you send your measurements and payment; they ship you the trousers — can require several back-and-forth shipments to get fit right)

_____ Step 4: Go Shopping

_____ Head to your target store or stores (see step 3)

_____ Identify the trousers that fit your selected description (see step 2)

_____ Within that selection, find the pairs that fit your measurements (step 1)

With the information in this checklist, you should be able your selection down to just a few pairs of trousers. Find the one that suits you best at the price you like — or move on, if you need to, and use the same information to shop elsewhere, until you find a purchase you like.