

MOST MEN LOOK THEIR BEST WHEN THEY UNDERSTAND WHICH COLLARS ENHANCE THEIR FEATURES.

HAUTE UNDER THE COLLAR

The proper collar and knot can greatly improve your look. By William Kissel

Shirt makers often brag about the thread count of their fine cotton fabrics, the single-needle stitching at the seams, the split-shouldered yokes, even the distinctive crow's foot stitching used to fasten the mother-of-pearl buttons.

But before you get bogged down by myriad styling, color and pattern options, make sure that your shirt collar and tie knot are the proper match for your face.

"Think of your face as a portrait and your shirt collar as its frame," offers menswear designer and author Alan Flusser, who approached the subject of proper shirt selection in his book *Style and the Man*.

"The collar's height on your neck as well as the length and spread of its points should complement the shape and size of your face," he explains, noting that most men look their best when they understand which collars enhance their features.

It doesn't require a degree in shirt science to comprehend the principles of picking the proper collar. Think of your collar and necktie as a counterbalance to the dimensions of

your face and thickness of your neck. A long and narrow face, for instance, will look fuller peeking out of a high-collared shirt with a mod-

erate spread collar and fuller tie knot, such as a Windsor, Shelby or half-Windsor. In contrast, a broad face and thick neck can be made to

look leaner and longer simply by sporting a medium collar shirt and thinner knot, especially when both rest just below the collarbone.

These simple rules will help guide you to sartorial success:



Spread or Cutaway Spread collar shirts (and the slightly shorter, wider cutaway collar for more formal occasions) are designed to be worn with neckwear featuring a full or half-Windsor knot, a relatively wide knot once favored by (and named for) Edward VIII, the late Duke of Windsor. Designed to complement a long, narrow face, these collars are being featured as a fashion trend this season, often shown with skinny ties.



Straight or Long-Point Among the oldest and most universally accepted, the exaggerated straight-point collar, sometimes called a long-point, is generally three inches or longer and most effective at making a round, broad, or oval-shaped face appear more angular. Ideal for heavysset or athletic men in need of a slight slimming effect (or soft-chinned men craving a strong line under the jaw), this versatile collar can have a similar elongating effect on men with a shorter stance. Because of the narrow opening between the collar points, a classic four-in-hand neckwear knot with its flattering conical form achieves the perfect balance.



Tab or Pinned More casual than a classic straight-point collar, the tab or pin-collared shirt is primarily intended for use with a blazer or sport coat. Its distinctive feature is a buttoning bridge between the two wings—or eyelets on the wings used with a tie bar—to form a snug fit around a small, neat, four-in-hand knot. Because the bridge forces the collar higher up and the knot outward on the neck, this is an ideal combination for those looking to camouflage a long neck.



Button-down Originally worn by 19th century English polo players to keep their shirt collars from flapping during play, button-down collared shirts became an Ivy League tradition after they were adopted in the early 1900s by the late John Brooks of Brooks Brothers. A sporty alternative to the straight-point, the button-down (worn buttoned or unbuttoned depending on the degree of casualness) is best suited to a patterned four-in-hand knotted necktie. New button-down collars are larger with a slight roll.