

THE RIGHT SOLELECTION

Like this article?
Follow us
@Leaderonomics on
Facebook, Twitter
and Instagram.



This article is
available at www.leaderonomics.com, where you
can download the
PDF version.



A MAN'S GUIDE TO FOOTWEAR ESSENTIALS

By **JOSHUA DESMOND**
editor@leaderonomics.com

WHILE thinking about what I could focus on this time, I realised the last few articles were a little bit more skewed towards the female perspective, which led me to focus on this. There's not a lot of freedom when it comes to men dressing up at the workplace. We're usually stuck with the same styles but in different variations, and kicking it up a notch usually requires careful attention to details and additions to make your outfit pop.

There are a few ways men can spice up their outfits to avoid looking like they came out of an evil corporate factory and one of those ways is through the right shoe selection—or as the title says, solelection.

Now unless you're a sneakerhead, you probably won't see the need to spend on multiple pairs of shoes, especially when you only have one pair of feet to put them on and this leads to just settling for a pair that you use every day of the week until you have no choice but to get new ones.

However, having shoes in different styles to suit different ensembles can bring a breath of fresh air to your outfits and turn heads with every step.

Here are a two types of shoes that I believe every guy should have in his arsenal of footwear along with tips on how you can match them with the right outfits and occasions:

STYLE TIP #1 DRESS SHOES



BROWN BROGUES/WINGTIPS

These guys are versatile. Pair them with that navy or grey suit or those indigo denims on casual Fridays. They bring extra detail to your outfit, making you stand out amongst the sea of clones—who are almost certain to stick to their go-to black shoes every day of the week. Also, the designs on these brogues give an added touch to the details making it hard for your steps to go unnoticed.

BLACK CAP TOE OXFORDS

If your brogues are the yang, the black Oxfords are your yin. They go hand in hand. While lacking versatility, a pair of black cap toe Oxfords made with good quality leather add a premium touch to your outfit especially for occasions like black-tie events, fancy office events or even big meetings and presentations. It's hard to miss a well-polished pair of Oxfords, especially when paired with well-tailored suits.

Honestly, with these two pairs, you're good to go. Also, check out

monk straps. They are a great addition to the dress shoes collection and perfect when you want to spice things up a little. Great for both formal and semiformal attire.

BOOTS

Personally, this is my favourite category. For that added style factor, I like to go against tradition and pair my formal outfits with boots. Most would say for a formal setting, dress boots work best but I think with the right idea and styling, casual boots like *Dr Martens* or *Red Wings* work really well. Not to mention, when worn with denims, they make you look *real bad@ss*. Think *Sons of Anarchy*.

But bear in mind, the limit is for formal ensembles like a two-piece suit or slacks and a vest. A big no-no for black- or white-tie occasion or anytime you're in a three piece.

Additionally, you can add to the boot collection with a nice pair of desert boots or chukkas for those casual Fridays. They go really well with a pair of skinny or slim fit jeans paired with a buttoned-up shirt or plain T-shirt.



LOAFERS AND BOAT SHOES

Don't be mistaken. Loafers aren't the same as boat shoes. Loafers are more formal while boat shoes allow for versatility be it when you dress up or dress down. Loafers are a great alternative to brogues or Oxfords; without the strings, they provide a whole lot of convenience and comfort too. They even work with suits, too, although the old schoolers might disagree.

STYLE TIP #2 SNEAKERS



THE WHITE PAIR

Guys, if you don't have a pair of "white kicks," go and get one NOW. They're not only super stylish and versatile, they're a must-have. A clean pair, matched with jeans or khakis, will definitely get you looks. It's up to you whatever design you're going for because white just works. They may be understated but they do stand out.

TRAINERS

Add variety with a pair of trainers like Nike *Roshe* shoes, Adidas *NMD*'s or the countless hyped up sneakers currently in the market. But be careful, there are "trainer" trainers and there are trainers that sacrifice functionality for style. So just because they're decent to run in, don't use them for sports. Separate your sports sneakers from your show-off sneakers.

YOUR FIRST STEP INTO THE RIGHT PAIR

Before I end this, I'd like to leave you with one other tip: Download Pinterest! A wealth of ideas for shoe styles and pairing ideas that will give you a whole new take on shoes at the workplace.

Don't go overboard though. You don't want to get shoes that scream for attention because they can take attention away from your outfit and it's not necessarily a good thing. Follow fashion influencers on Instagram too. Many of them do really well in terms of styling for the workplace. I hope, with this, you will realise that you don't have to go about your work days in such a boring fashion. Next one: HEELS!

■ *Joshua Desmond is a recording artist and an award-winning adman. Between music and work, he moonlights as a freelance image consultant and stylist. He works closely with Paperplane Pursuit and has appeared in publications such as Juice, Masses, August Man and Esquire. He was one of the Top 5 in Esquire Malaysia's Best Dressed Real Man in 2014. He believes style does not require a huge bank account, just the right amount of inspiration and resourcefulness.*