

CERTIFIED MEN'S HEALTH COUNSELOR ONLINE COURSE: SESSION 15

- **Looking Your Best**

Essential Grooming Tips for Men to Look Sharp

Whether you are trying to impress that special someone on your first date, or you're just trying to look (and smell) more pleasant when you leave for the office or the local pub, proper grooming is crucial for making a good impression. If you're in the dark about proper grooming habits, like a lot of guys out there, you have nothing to fear. Just read this list of grooming tips for men to help you look more polished and presentable, while still having a masculine appearance:

How to Wash Your Face

Are you washing your face with the same harsh soap that you use to scrub your armpits and crotch? That's not a good idea. Not only is the skin on your face sensitive, but it's also the first thing that everybody sees. Scaly, dried out skin doesn't look good. Avoid soaps with strong smells and opt for a gentle non-soap face cleanser.

Trim Nose Hairs

Protruding nose hairs are never, ever acceptable. They cannot be used to enhance appearance, and are just flat-out unsightly. Invest in a pair of nose hair trimmers or tweezers and make sure you always keep those puppies where they should be - in your nose! Specialized nose clippers are also available for that quick, nose hair trim. It's cruel: As the hair starts disappearing from your scalp, it sprouts everywhere you don't want it. When it comes to nose hairs, don't pluck. First, it hurts. Second, nose hairs actually help filter out the air going into your lungs. Instead, use scissors or an electric trimmer to cut back the hairs a bit. You can use them on ear hairs, too.

Take Care of Your Eyebrows

Eyebrow maintenance is not restricted to women only. While you want to avoid thin, feminine eyebrows, you do want to keep them somewhat cleaned and polished. Consider a little plucking and trimming to keep them inline and straight while keeping them full and masculine. And in case you were wondering, they're called "eyebrows," not "eyebrow." Always make sure there are two of them before heading out, not just one.

Take Care of Your Lips

While most men feel awkward when it comes to applying anything to their lips, they need to remember: lip balm is not lipstick. Preventing chapped lips is important for proper grooming and will help prevent your lips from crusting and bleeding. If you're afraid it will make you look too feminine, just avoid the glittery and ultra-glossy variety.

Groom Your Ears

Men often overlook their ears during their regular grooming session. Ear hairs, ear wax, dry skin and build-up in and around the ears should all be taken care of as a part of your grooming regimen. Pay special attention to your ears right after having your hair cut because there will definitely be unsightly hair trimmings inside and around your ears that your barber is likely to miss.

Brush and Floss Regularly

Most men know that brushing their teeth is important. The problem is many are guilty of not knowing how to brush properly. And flossing? Flossing is probably skipped by the majority of men out there. Just remember that the plaque between your teeth can cause bad breath as well.

Don't Bathe in Cologne

While you may be overly self-conscious about body odor, that doesn't give you an excuse to literally bathe in your cologne or aftershave. It's good that you're thinking about your scent, but having too much fragrance on your body can be just as revolting. Just get a few dabs of cologne on the insides of your wrists then apply to your neck to have a faint, yet appealing scent that should meet most people's approval. Go ahead and wear cologne. But if you do, don't *also* use a scented soap, aftershave, deodorant, and face cream. Stinking up the office with a cocktail of clashing manly scents isn't a good idea. When it comes to smell, subtle is best. Something else to consider: the more scented stuff you put on yourself, the higher the odds you'll irritate your skin.

Trim Your Nails

Long nails work for women, never for men. Men have a tendency to get their hands dirtier, and long finger nails means you are tracking dirt from almost everything you touch. Keep your nails trimmed regularly, and use a scrubber or loofa for cleaning underneath and around your finger nails. Even if you don't pay them any mind, your hands get noticed every day -- every time you shake someone else's, for instance. Dirty or ragged fingernails aren't manly. They're a turnoff. Consider a manicure -- men get them too -- to get you on track. If not, do the bare minimum. Trim your nails regularly. Invest a few dollars in a nail brush and use it.

Foot Care

Of all the body parts that men ignore, your feet might be most neglected. But your partner is bound to notice them -- especially if scratched by your toenail in the night. Trim your nails straight across regularly. Soak your feet and sand away some of that dead skin with a pumice stone. It might seem fussy, but you'll both like the results.

If You Have Facial Hair, Take Care of It

Nothing is wrong with growing a beard, even if it's longer than the average man's hair length. Facial hair can be used to enhance a man's look and facial features. Just don't forget that you need to take care of your facial hair the same way you would take care of the hair on your head. Always trim and wash your facial hair to prevent it from looking unsightly. And lastly, try to keep your food and drinks off of your facial hair.

Take Your Time While Shaving

It's amazing how most men can blast through a daily shaving. It's almost as if they don't realize they are handling a sharp blade that is scraping at their face. Shaving cuts just make you look ridiculous, so take your time when handling your razor. Properly coat your face with shaving cream, gel or soap, and slowly shave each section, shaving with the grain, not against it. Also invest in aftershave lotion to keep your skin smooth and moisturized. Considering that most men do it daily, it's amazing how bad they can be at shaving. For one, they're

impatient. They slap on a big beard of shaving cream and start scraping immediately. Instead, give shaving cream three minutes to permeate and soften the hairs. If you shave in the shower, let water soak in for a few minutes before you shave. It's why men used to get hot towels over their faces before a shave. While razors often have four blades or more, that doesn't necessarily mean they're better -- especially if you keep re-shaving the same area. Too much focus on a close shave can result in nicks and razor burn. Better to go to work with a hint of stubble than with tissue on your nicks. If ingrown hairs are a problem, try exfoliation or use shaving gel instead of foam and shave in the direction hair grows.

Lotion is Not Just for Women

There are plenty of guys who are guilty of hands that feel like they were dipped in battery acid, flaky arms and ashy legs. Maybe it's because they think lotion is for the ladies only. However, lotion is important for guys too. If you're afraid of looking or smelling girly, just grab the unscented kind and apply it when no one is looking.

Skin and Sun

After about three or four decades, the sun starts to take a toll on your face. Most of the wrinkles we associate with old age are actually the result of sun damage. Some guys pull off that weather-beaten look. The rest just look wrinkly. Protect your skin by using a face cream containing sunblock -- SPF15 or higher.

Plastic Surgery for Men

The number of people choosing to have plastic surgery has soared in recent years. Technological advances have increased the options you can consider. But do your research before you consider any operation. All surgery carries some risk. And while plastic surgery can improve a part of your body, it rarely improves your whole life. Make sure your goals are realistic.

Are You a Good Candidate for Cosmetic Surgery?

Generally speaking, you are a good candidate for cosmetic surgery if you are close to your ideal body weight, a nonsmoker, and are emotionally and socially in good shape. You should be exercising and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. It's generally wise to have less than one alcoholic drink a day for women and two drinks a day for men, and to limit your caffeine. Alcohol is a mild blood thinner, and caffeine can slightly raise blood pressure, so cutting back on both is a good idea before surgery. Finally, you must understand and accept the disadvantages of cosmetic surgery, such as cost, inconvenience, discomfort, and medical risk. Why? It's important to have realistic expectations. Cosmetic surgery cannot change your life or make you 20 years younger. Moreover, if you smoke or drink a lot, you face a higher risk of complications and the results from a cosmetic procedure may not last as long as you'd like. You may be a poor candidate for cosmetic surgery if you have serious health problems that include:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- A bleeding disorder
- Heart or lung disease
- Obesity
- Severe allergies

- High cholesterol
- Arthritis
- Depression

If you suffer from any of these health problems, or if you smoke or drink alcohol excessively, you face a higher risk of complications. Some surgeons insist that smokers quit for two to four weeks prior to surgery and remain smoke-free for two to four weeks after surgery. This helps proper healing and recovery.

Be sure you give your surgeon a complete medical history, including medications such as aspirin, vitamins, and herbal compounds and supplements you take. These products can interfere with blood clotting or with other medications used during surgery.

Embarrassing Male Body Problems

Back Hair

By the mid-20s, a man will know his back hair destiny: barely there, a few tufts, or full and bushy. Is yours a magnet for women? Or a throwback to the Stone Age? If you want to tame the shag, laser hair removal can thin back hair or remove it all and the results are nearly permanent. Cheaper options include waxing, hair removal creams, and razors, with results that last up to a few weeks.



Beer Belly

You don't have to drink beer to get a beer belly. Men are more likely to gain fat around the waist, so anything fattening can pad the paunch. Unfortunately, belly fat raises the risk of heart disease, especially if your waist size is more than 40 inches. But there is good news: If you follow a weight loss plan, belly fat is usually the first to go.

Excessive Sweating

Men have a higher "sweat output" than women. That's a fact. But if you always need to wipe your hands or often sweat through your clothes, it may be more than a "guy" thing. It could be excessive sweating, called hyperhidrosis. Emotions or heat can trigger the downpour -- or nothing at all. It usually affects the armpits, palms, or soles of the feet.

Pruning Your Eyebrows – Unibrow

Now here's a hair problem that affects men of all ages. Are your eyebrows looking like an unweeded garden? The same hormones that make your beard grow can make your eyebrows so thick and bushy that they meet in the center. "Unibrow" is the most common reason young men get electrolysis. This procedure uses tiny electric shocks to permanently destroy the hair follicles. Waxing is another way to shape your brows, but it must be repeated every four to six weeks. Occasional plucking might be enough. If you have a true unibrow looming above your face, you might need more drastic measures.



Razor Bumps

You work hard for that close shave. So it can be exasperating when small bumps mar your otherwise smooth skin. Razor bumps form when hairs curl back on themselves and grow into the skin. They're most common in African-Americans and men with curly hair. To keep the bumps at bay, take a hot shower before shaving. Apply a thick gel, and always shave in the direction your beard grows.

Rosacea

Maybe it's not embarrassment that's causing all that blushing. Rosacea is a condition that causes the face to flush, and symptoms tend to be worse in men. The nose may become thick, red, or bulbous. Pimples and tiny red lines can appear on the cheeks. Alcohol can trigger a flare up, but the distinctive, red nose of rosacea can occur in a teetotaler. Medications can prevent it from getting worse, so be sure to discuss your symptoms with your doctor.

Receding Hairline

The painful truth is most guys have noticeably thinner hair by age 35 and significant hair loss by age 50. The pattern usually begins with a receding hairline and may progress to bald spots on the top of the scalp. Hair restoration surgery offers a way to reduce bald patches. Or you can talk to your doctor about prescription medications for hair loss. But beware of other products that promise the moon. If your hair is thinning, grooming experts have blunt advice: own up to it. Don't hide it with longer hair, or lots of product, or elaborate styling. No one will be fooled, except maybe you. Get it cut short or shave it off entirely. You'll look better and realize you had nothing to be ashamed of. We spoke about this in a previous session.

Color Blindness

Color blindness usually does not mean seeing the world in black and white. The most common form makes it difficult to tell red from green, a problem that affects about 10 million American men. The way the condition is inherited makes it far less common in women. There's no treatment, but most people can learn to work around the color confusion.

Snoring

Face the music: Snoring is a surefire way to disrupt your bed partner's sleep, and men are more likely to be the perpetrators. In most cases, snoring is not harmful. But snoring regularly can chip away at the quality of your own sleep. It can also be a sign of a more serious problem called sleep apnea. If you feel snoring is disrupting you or your partner's sleep, consult a doctor.

Belching

Burping may not be the picture of politeness in American society, but in some cultures a hearty belch shows appreciation for a good meal. In either case, burping a few times after eating is normal. It's the body's way of freeing the air that you've swallowed. Frequent burping combined with other symptoms, such as nausea or belly pain, could be a sign of a digestive disorder. Check with your doctor if the problem continues.

Gas

Perhaps no bodily function has inspired as many jokes as gas. While the sound and smell can be embarrassing, passing gas is harmless. It's nothing more than air moving through the digestive tract or gas from the breakdown of food by bacteria in your gut coming out -- well, we all know where. Gas facts:

- Most people pass gas 6-20 times a day.
- Beer, soda, beans, and many fruits and vegetables are all likely to gas you up.
- Foods that cause gas differ for each person.

Body Odor

Whether you're working hard or playing hard, any strenuous activity can result in strong body odor. The culprit is not sweat itself, but the bacteria that use sweaty skin as a breeding ground. You can fight the bacteria by showering regularly with soap and using antiperspirant. Also be sure to wash workout clothes often. If body odor persists, try avoiding smelly foods like garlic and onions.

Jock Itch

You don't have to be a pro athlete to get jock itch. This fungal infection spreads easily at your local gym -- or from another part of your own body. Hands, towels, and stepping into underwear are common culprits. The symptoms include a patchy rash on the groin or inner thighs, along with the telltale itching. It's treated with nonprescription antifungal creams. Keeping the area dry and avoiding tight clothing helps to avoid a repeat engagement.

Athlete's Foot

When the fungus that causes jock itch targets the feet, you have athlete's foot. Walking barefoot in locker rooms or near pools is the most common way to pick up this infection. Symptoms include itching, burning, blisters, or cracks on the feet and toes. Athlete's foot is treated with antifungal cream. If you have both jock itch and athlete's foot, be sure to treat them at the same time.

Ingrown Nails

Grooming your nails may not be the highlight of your day, but it's worth your time to get the job done right. Clumsy nail trimming is the top cause of ingrown toenails, which can cause pain, swelling, and infections. The most common mistake is trimming the nails too short. To avoid this, check your drugstore for nail "nippers" that are shaped to follow the natural curve of the nail.

Bad Breath

You probably know that smelly foods and smoking can sabotage your breath. But the most common culprit is bacteria. When you brush your teeth, brush your tongue as well to banish the bacteria that thrive there. If good hygiene doesn't sweeten your breath, see your dentist and your doctor. Gum disease, dry mouth, or acid reflux could be part of the problem. Bad breath is a colossal turnoff, but how do you know if you have it? This will give you an idea: lick the back of your hand, wait, and smell. Causes of halitosis vary. Some guys resolve it with a toothbrush or fewer onions. If you still have chronic bad breath despite precautions, see a doctor. You could have dental problems or an infection.

Sexual Dysfunction

Men may not be eager to discuss sexual troubles, but nearly a third of guys experience problems. This may include a sagging libido, premature ejaculation, or erectile dysfunction (ED). ED means a man is unable to develop or sustain an erection. Risk factors for ED include diabetes, heart disease, neurologic conditions, smoking, circulation problems, and some medications. Talk to your doctor if you have ED or other sexual problems to help evaluate the problem and recommend treatment and we've spoken about this in a previous session.

Hearing Loss

Men are more likely to experience hearing loss than women, and noisy jobs may contribute. Think miners, carpenters, and soldiers. But any loud or continuous noise can damage delicate ear structures, including music piped in through ear buds. On the job, use special ear protection. Keep personal music players at or below 85 decibels (dB). Most can crank up to 105 dB, louder than a motorcycle, wood shop, or snowmobile.

Enlarged Prostate

Along with wrinkles and gray hair, an enlarged prostate is an unavoidable part of aging for many men. The medical term is benign prostatic hyperplasia or BPH, an enlargement of the gland that surrounds the urethra. This growth causes symptoms in about half of men over age 75. As the prostate grows, it may squeeze the urethra, making you feel nature's call more often. There are strategies and medications to help reduce the symptoms and we've spoken about those in a previous session.

Men's Hair Loss: Treatments and Solutions

Hair Loss: A Common Problem

About 85% of men will have significant hair thinning by the time they're 50, according to the American Hair Loss Association. Some men begin to lose their hair before they even turn 21.



Uncovering Hair Loss Myths

Does wearing a baseball cap cause baldness? Nope. Someone running their fingers through your hair won't cause it either. Neither will combing, brushing, twisting, nor styling. But avoid being too rough to prevent hair breakage.

Quit Smoking and Save Your Hair?

Several studies show a significant relationship between smoking and how fast male-pattern baldness gets worse. So if you need one more reason to quit smoking, add early hair loss to your list.

What Hair Loss Says About Your Health

Fortunately, in most cases, hair loss -- known as alopecia -- doesn't signal a medical problem. And it poses no health risk. But worries about hair loss's impact on first impressions or whether balding makes you look older are common.

What Causes Hair Loss?

More than 95% of male hair loss is due to male-pattern baldness, a genetic trait. The gene can come from either parent. In other cases, certain medications, having too much vitamin A, or not getting enough protein can cause hair to fall out. Dramatic shedding of hair known as telogen effluvium can be caused by illness or stress. In men, hair loss not due to male-pattern baldness often reverses itself.

Work to Keep the Hair You Have

Preventing hair loss is easier than replacing it once it's gone. If you want to find something that will work for you, do your homework. But be careful. Most *miracle* products and treatments are shams. When in doubt, your doctor or a dermatologist may be able to help.

Hair Loss Medication: Minoxidil

Although there's no way to cure male-pattern baldness, you can slow it down with some medications. Minoxidil is an FDA-approved over-the-counter medication you apply to your scalp. It slows the rate of hair loss in men, and some men even grow new hair. But once you stop using it, hair loss returns.

Male-Pattern Baldness: What to Expect

A tell-tale sign of male-pattern baldness is a receding, M-shaped hairline. Next, the hair on top of your head also starts to thin, leaving a bald spot. Eventually, the two meet, leaving a horseshoe pattern of hair around the sides. The Norwood Scale, seen here, is used to rate male-pattern baldness.

Male-Pattern Baldness: Blame Hormones

With male-pattern baldness, a hormone called DHT causes hair follicles to shrink. Eventually, the follicles shrink so much that no hair can grow in them.

Hair Loss Medication: Finasteride

Taken as a prescription pill, finasteride slows hair loss by slowing down the body's production of DHT. Some men have been able to grow new hair while using it. In general, it's considered to work better than minoxidil. Pregnant women should not handle the drug since it can cause birth defects in male fetuses. Like minoxidil, it works only as long as it's used.

Should You Wear a Hairpiece?

Hairpieces have come a long way in how they look. Finding the right one, though, takes time and study. There's a wide range in cost and quality. And hairpieces require regular maintenance which can run between \$60 and \$300 per month. When shopping, look to match your own hair color, thickness, and curl.

What Happens With a Hair Transplant

A doctor will move healthy hair from the back and side of your head to the top to restore a natural look. Hair transplants can be costly and you may have to have several procedures. After two months, most of the transplanted hair is shed, but new hair grows back.

Within six months the hair starts to look normal.

Make the Most of the Hair You Have

There are some styling tricks you can use to make your hair loss less noticeable. Cutting thinning hair short lets you avoid obvious comb-overs. Hair care and styling products may add volume to your hair. Eating a balanced diet and handling your hair gently will also help.

Accentuate the Positive

Hair does not make the man. Remind yourself of all you have to offer others. Or take care of things you can control, such as staying in shape. It's OK to look to others for support. If you need a boost, think of bald men (or those who shaved their heads) like Ed Harris, Patrick Stewart, and Michael Jordan, who ooze confidence. Then consider yourself in good company.

**CERTIFIED MEN'S HEALTH COUNSELOR ONLINE COURSE - SESSION 15
QUESTION & ANSWERS**

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY, STATE, ZIP, PC: _____
PHONE: _____
FAX: _____
E-MAIL: _____

Please be sure to fill out the information above, complete the test and e-mail or mail it back to us at iridology@netzero.net or P.O. Box 485, Weimar, CA, 95736-0485. We will grade your question & answer session and will let you know if we have any questions or concerns. **Please use a separate sheet to do this assignment.**

There is no homework for this session.