

Menswear Timeline

How we have clothed men since the 1920s - from basic workwear to the latest fabric innovations



Display of men's pyjamas, 1937



Display of men's shirts, 1937



CC41 St Michael shirt, 1941

1926

We introduced menswear in the 1920s, with our Drapery department established in 1926. Our menswear included tennis pullovers, shirts, underwear and sock suspenders.

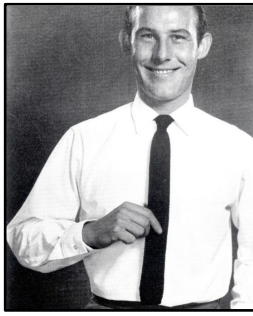
1930s

By the 1930s our menswear range had expanded to include everything a well-dressed man could expect, including wool beach shirts, raincoats and walking boots.

We advertised that a gentleman could purchase a whole outfit for under £1 – the equivalent of about £45 today.

1940s

During the Second World War, the government ensured garment quality remained high by introducing regulations for manufacturers. Known as the Utility Clothing Scheme, the regulations were implemented in 1942. We produced men's clothing under the scheme, all carrying the CC41 label.



Shirt and knitted tie, 1950s

1950s

The Menswear department concentrated on classic, practical designs such as sleeveless cardigans and pullovers in plain colours. We reported in a 1953 staff magazine that 'Men, despite their passing enthusiasm for Fair Isle designs and patterns, are notoriously conservative in their choice of knitwear'.



Display of drip dry shirts, c1955

1953

We saw an increase in popularity in shirts with attached collars, rather than those with detachable collars secured with studs. Shirt collars were important to men in the 1950s, we wrote in 1953 that 'The decisive factor in shirt buying is generally the collar'.



Worsted trousers, 1956

1956

Our woolen worsted trousers, made from fabric woven in Yorkshire, were made using 36 separate expert tailoring processes to ensure good fit and hang.



Knitwear, 1959

1958

We reported a huge success with men's chunky knitwear. The following year the range was expanded to include more colours, cable detail and 'a long sleeve cardigan to be worn as a leisure garment'.



Menswear spring, 1968

1960s

Fabrics such as Terylene, Courtelle and Bri-Nylon were introduced into menswear to create drip-dry, minimum-iron, easy-care garments that were hardwearing yet fashionable.



Men's short sleeved shirt, 1962

1962

At the start of the decade our menswear customers were getting more adventurous. In 1962 we said 'It is no longer considered effeminate, for a man to wear something else besides grey flannels and a white cricket shirt when he's on the beach'.



New Look shirts, 1967

1966

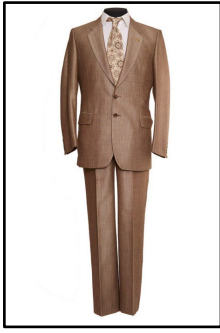
The 'New Look' range of men's shirts was introduced – featuring stronger colours and available in either fly-front or bluff collar.



Young St Michael leaflet, 1970

1970

We launched Young St Michael, 'created for young sophisticates with modern ideas on fashion'. The men's range included deep-collared shirts with matching scarf ties, slim-fitting knitwear and flared velvet-look trousers.



Pinstriped suit, 1972

1972

The range of menswear sold in store increased with the establishment of our suit department in 1972. Suits were trialed in a small number of stores at first, and by 1974 over 100 stores had a dedicated suit department. 1974 also saw the first trials of men's cashmere jumpers.



Marksman window display, 1972

1972

The experimental Marksman campaign was trialed, with bold colours and the tagline 'For Today's Marksman'. Despite sales being up during the trial period, the colours were considered too gimmicky and the campaign discontinued.



Sportswear, 1976

1976

Men's sportswear was introduced – sportswear hadn't been sold in store since the 1930s. The colour theme for the range was red, white and blue. The collection included shorts, tracksuits and a weatherproof jacket as well as training shoes and a sports bag.



Television advert, c1978

1978

Menswear was advertised on television for the first time. The first advert promoted wool suits and jumpers.



Suits, 1981

1981

The 1980s saw one of our biggest fashion innovations – colour match technology. Previously, suit jackets and trousers had to be cut from the same piece of cloth to ensure they matched and were sold as a set. Colour match technology let the customer buy his jacket and trousers separately, ensuring both fitted perfectly.



Suits, 1989

1983

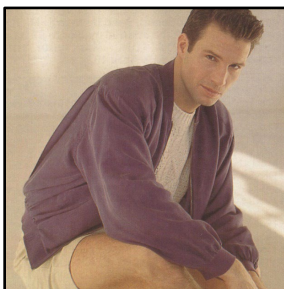
Suit ranges in our stores expanded and M&S suit sales increased by 40% – an average of 1500 suits a week were sold. Dustin Hoffman, on the recommendation of Kirk Douglas, bought £2500 worth of M&S suits!



Menswear supplement, 1985

1989

A standalone menswear store opened in the City of London, to cater to businessmen working nearby. The shop had a number of trained suit advisors to provide expert service. The mid-1980s saw menswear shops opening in various locations across the country.



Silk blouson jacket, 1991

1991

Natural fabrics were in demand, with Italian-influenced silk and linen becoming popular. We introduced linen jackets and trousers, printed silk shirts and blouson jackets in 1991.



Italian Collection 1998

1998

We launched our Italian Collection in 1998. M&S selectors worked closely with suppliers in Britain and Italy on design and tailoring. Fabrics used were sourced from Marzotto, a supplier for designers such as Giorgio Armani and Gianfranco Ferré.



Sartorial Collection, 2000

1999

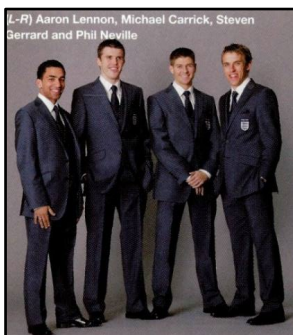
Our Sartorial suiting range designed by tailor Timothy Everest was launched. The range was the start of a long partnership with Everest.



Blue Harbour in-store design, 2002

2000

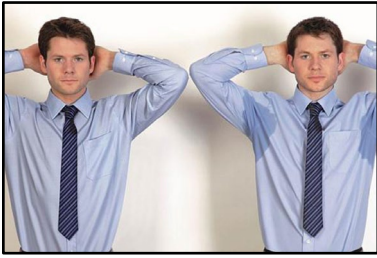
The early 2000s saw the launch of sub-brands within menswear, including Autograph in 2000, Classic and Perfect in 2001, and Blue Harbour and Collezione in 2002. Blue Harbour featured popular casual classics such as polo shirts, chinos and cotton shirts.



England football suit, Your M&S Magazine, 2007

2007

We marked our first collaboration with the England Football team when the FA announced M&S as the official tailor to the team. The suits were designed by Timothy Everest.



Sweat-Free shirt for men, 2011

2011

We launched a range of 'sweat-free' shirts called The Dry Extreme Shirt. The range was the first of its kind on the high street. In the week of their launch, the shirts outsold all other shirt styles at M&S.



Saville Row Inspired, 2012

2012

Sartorial was re-launched, working with Savile Row tailor Richard James, as the Savile Row Inspired collection. The range placed an emphasis on British cloth.



StayNEW logo, 2012

2012

StayNEWTM technology was launched in men's t-shirts. The innovation ensures that fabric retains its original texture and colour for longer.



Best of British, 2013

2013

We launched our first Best of British menswear range at the British Fashion Council's London Collections: Men weekend. The entire range was designed and made in the UK using British fabrics, including woolen cloth from Abraham Moon in Leeds, Harris Tweed from the Outer Hebrides and Cashmere from Todd & Duncan in Edinburgh.



David Gandy swimwear, 2015

2014

We partnered with model David Gandy to launch the 28-piece Autograph by David Gandy range of underwear and sleepwear. The range later expanded to include beachwear and loungewear.



Big and Tall range, 2017

2017

Our men's Big & Tall range was expanded to include more suits and a collection of gymwear. The formalwear range included suits in sizes ranging from jackets in 36-54in and trousers in 28-48in.



James Doidge on Sky News, July 2018

2018

As official tailors since 2007, M&S once again provided suits to the England men's football team. Gareth Southgate's M&S waistcoat became famous during the World Cup. Sales across all our waistcoats doubled and our Head of Menswear Design James Doidge appeared on Sky News to discuss the waistcoat.



M&S World Magazine, 2019

2019

After speaking to thousands of men, we improved our menswear fits to have wider appeal. We gave our Regular Fit a more modern, slimmer silhouette to fit and flatter more customers, bringing them contemporary wearable style, along with our trusted value.



Jack & Jones jacket, 2021

2021

As part of our Never the Same Again programme, we launched 'Brands at M&S' on M&S.com. Selected Homme and Jack & Jones products are sold alongside our own Autograph and Goodmove brands.

Following the purchase of the Jaeger brand by M&S, we now offer a Jaeger menswear collection including Egyptian cotton shirts and jackets tailored using wool from British mills.



M&S Originals, 2022

2021

M&S Originals arrived, inspired by the archive and designed in collaboration with our sustainability team.

The result was our most sustainable collection yet, including recycled cotton, Responsible Wool Standard-certified wool and fabric woven in Yorkshire woolen mills.



Anything but Ordinary, 2023

2023

We launched our 'Anything but Ordinary' Autumn Menswear campaign - our first standalone menswear campaign since 2015.

Captured against the vibrant city of Manchester, we described the campaign as 'bold, disruptive and embodying the attitude and style of today's menswear customer'.

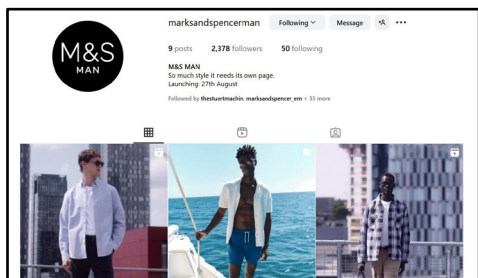


Paper packaging, 2025

2025

We switched to paper packaging across our Men's Essentials clothing range cutting almost 5.5 million units of plastic over the first 12 months.

All men's socks and woven pyjama sets, and almost 40% of men's underwear lines, moved to FSC-approved paper packaging with paper hooks, which are easily recycled at home.



M&S Man Instagram, 2025

2025

On 27th August we launched our own dedicated Menswear account on Instagram, M&S Man.

It was a new way for us to connect with male customers who were actively searching for style advice, outfit inspiration, and new-season looks.



M&S X Aries, 2026

2026

M&S X Aries arrived. We teamed up with the luxury streetwear brand for a truly iconic limited-edition collection. Inspired by the M&S Archive, the collaboration used elements from our design heritage to form the backbone of the collection.