

What to Wear [or not!] this summer

Interview by Stewart Schley

Photo for Screenz by Arnold Adler

Want to look your best as the mercury climbs?

Fashion expert **Clinton Kelly** wants you to re-think the mini-skirt, lose the white socks, and keep things colorful. (Oh, and some of you might want to stop dressing like teenagers.)

Golf shirts for men. Should they stay on the golf course?

Actually, I think the polo shirt is kind of a big look. A great polo shirt that looks like a golf shirt is completely appropriate. But you don't want to mix the two. There's athletic wear, and then there's casual wear. When you're on the golf course, you want to wear a shirt that's loose to give you freedom of movement for your swing and your follow through, so they tend to look a little droopy. That's fine for the golf course, but if you wear that same oversized shirt out to lunch or to work, it just kind of looks dumpy.

I'm a fashion-challenged guy who's just been invited to a 4th of July lawn party. What should I wear?

A polo shirt in a rich color with a pair of flat-front trousers would be fantastic. If it's a lawn party, maybe a nice leather strapped sandal. Or if it's really casual, a non-athletic sneaker in a fun color.

Same question, but for women.

It gets a little bit trickier with women, just because they have different curves, but I feel like for the majority of women, a cotton jersey wrap dress is going to get you through a wide variety of situations. It looks summery, it looks sexy, you can dress it up for nighttime, you can dress it down for daytime.

It's impossible to talk summer fashion without bringing up the "S" word: Swimsuit.

Women are freaking out over swimsuits because everybody's wearing bikinis now. It scares some women to death. My feeling is you shouldn't wear a bikini just because everyone else is wearing a bikini. You should do it because you feel fantastic and sexy and beautiful in it.

And if you don't?

I feel like the tankini has become a bit of a new standard. If you have little bit of a tummy, that way you can wear a tankini that covers most of the tummy, or you can see maybe just a little bit of skin under that so technically you're wearing a two-piece, but you get the coverage of a one-piece. It's hard to make rules any more detailed than that when it comes to swimwear for women, because women's bodies have such a range. I would say, only wear things you feel great in, and don't feel pressured to wear a bikini just because your daughter's wearing one.

Any tips for looking good in sunglasses?

I think a pair of aviators are so classic. You just can't go wrong. They fit nicely with these fashion trends that are going on for both men and women this spring and summer.

What's in your closet for this summer?

I haven't decided on my uniform yet. But last summer it was Lacoste polo shirts and cargo shorts. I like the idea of preppy, but not that 1980s preppy. I like doing something a little bit more urban.

Your "uniform?" What is this, the army?

It's a look that works for me, and it's something I don't have to think about all that much. I had about seven Lacoste polo shirts that I'd intermix with about three pairs of cargo shorts. So I knew I could walk out of the house and look put together by mixing and matching any of those things, and at the same time feel like I'm wearing something different.

The enduring question: Can you wear white after Labor Day?

You can absolutely wear white after Labor Day. You just have to make sure you're doing it in the appropriate situation. If it's snowing outside, don't wear white. If it's still beautiful outside after Labor Day, wear all the white you want.

Finally: Is it ever okay for men to wear white socks underneath summer sandals?

OH, MY GOD! That is never, ever, ever, ever okay. Never!

Frumpy sweat suits, beware: Clinton Kelly is on the prowl. Closet by closet, the co-host (with the bubbly Stacy London) of TLC's "What Not to Wear" is remaking wardrobes and dispensing solid advice about affordable style. Screenz caught up with the former fashion-magazine editor at the show's New York City studios for some sorely needed summer fashion tips.

What is it about summer that leads otherwise tasteful people to show up at the door wearing a tie-dyed T-shirt and bike shorts?

Hah! A couple of things. If you live in a climate that has a wide range of temperatures, all winter long you're bundled up, and eventually that 80-degree day comes along and you just want to run through the streets naked because you're so excited not to be wearing a down vest! Also, people just want to be comfortable. I hear it all the time.

You yourself have confessed an affinity for cheap flip-flop sandals.

I love them. For five bucks you can go to the drugstore and get a pair of flip-flops. I don't wear them to work, but believe me, all day Saturday and all day Sunday I'm going to wear them.

What are some of fashion "don'ts" to avoid this summer?

I think a lot of it has to do with age-appropriateness, and situation appropriateness. You don't wear those favorite flip-flops to work. You don't wear a tank top and shorts to work. And then there's the age-appropriateness thing: As we say on the show, "No mini-skirts after 35." We're not saying that after 35 you're

old, but after a certain point, when you try to dress really young, like the kids are all dressing, and you're obviously not a kid anymore, it actually makes you look older. And we get that a lot in summer.

Charter Smart Tip

Get more style tips from **CLINTON KELLY** on "What Not to Wear," Friday nights on TLC.

