



PM Time Service



Vintage Pocket Watches, Wrist Watches, Accessories & Jewelry

"How To Wear" Guide: Straight-Style Watch Chains

Straight chains, also known as "sport", "tuxedo" or "opera" style, are the most elementary of the watch chains as they do not have the additional "arms" or "drops" characteristic of the Albert or Double Albert chains. Although available in different lengths, the chains are meant to be worn draped as opposed to pulled taught. Early styles included versions that featured parallel double chains and slides along the length of the chain(s), as seen in the photos with the t-bar connection below. Chains that feature these slides tend to work better when worn somewhat more horizontally (for example, when going into a vest pocket as opposed to a pants pocket).

Note: although the watches in the following photos are shown half-out-of-pocket, this is merely to illustrate the attachment of the chain to the watch. Pocket watches should be worn entirely inside the pocket, ideally within a velvet or thin leather pouch for additional protection.

Spring Rings:

The spring ring is the most straightforward means of attaching the pocket watch chain to the wearer's garment. It is a more modern form of connection than the t-bar and has a diverse set of methods for use.

Larger rings can be attached to a buttonhole (on a vest or shirt), can be clipped around the belt loop on jeans or pants or can be used to attach the chain to itself after being looped around the wearer's belt.

Some of the larger spring rings feature a "chain guard," which is a protrusion that prevents rotation of the ring in the buttonhole, or functions to keep different attachments separate on the ring.

Smaller rings, typically found on lighter weight chains, can be attached around the thread behind a button. This method of attachment emulates a t-bar style of display with the additional security found with the spring ring clasp



Straight Chain w/ Spring Ring (Vest)



Straight Chain w/ Spring Ring (Pants)



Straight Chain w/ T-Bar (Vest)



Straight Chain w/ T-Bar (Shirt)

T-Bars:

The t-bar, made to be passed through a buttonhole, is the earliest form of connection between the pocket watch chain and the wearer's vest or shirt; it predated the spring ring and various clips used afterwards.

Fancy or ornate t-bars tend to be worn from the inside-out (to make visible and display the t-bars, as shown here); standard t-bars are usually worn outside-in (so they aren't visible).

Lobster-Claw Clips & Belt Clips:

The lobster-claw style clip is a very modern form of pocket watch chain connection, as it was introduced well after the t-bar, spring ring, and other belt clips. This style of clip is most often used to attach the chain to a belt loop, as pictured here.

Belt clips are also used to attach pocket watch chains. The two left photos here show a "pressure-fit" clip that was introduced in the middle of the 20th century.



Straight Chain w/ Belt Clip



Detail of a Belt Clip



Straight Chain w/ Lobster-Claw Style Clip

Misc.:



Swivel

Regardless of the method used to attach the chain to the wearer's vest, shirt, or pants, the bow of the pocket watch is attached to the chain with a small swivel clasp that allows the watch to rotate and keeps the chain from twisting. These swivels are findings that are traditionally used with pocket watches on most vintage pocket watch chains. As opposed to many of the more modern styles, these do not have any small latches to pull back but rather part of the oval "clip" section depresses into the finding, allowing you to slip in your pocket watch bow or fob lanyard. Once released, it has a small internal spring that closes the oval loop back up and prevents whatever is clipped from accidentally coming out without your intervention.

A pocket watch can be worn on either side of the body depending on the preference of the wearer. For instance, many right-handed wearers may have their pocket watch on the left side of the body; this allows for winding with the right hand while holding the watch with the left. However, a right-handed wearer may instead choose to keep the watch on the right for ease-of-use when pulling and returning the watch to a pocket as well.

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