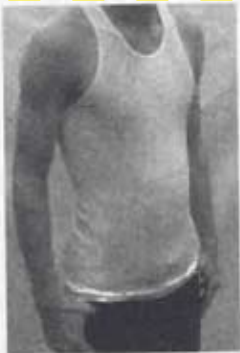




AS SEEN IN
ESQUIRE
THE BIG BLACK BOOK
SPRING 09



**WHITE
TANK TOP**

The good: Covers the high-sweat areas of the torso.

The bad: Does nothing for your armpits.

Cotton tank top (three for \$30) by 2(x)ist; freshpair.com.

The Information • Cool



**THE GREAT
UNDERSHIRT
QUESTION:**

A once-and-for-all highly scientific dictate on whether to wear one

ON MAY 17, 1881, *The New York Times* estimated that several thousand New York City deaths had resulted from the switch from winter to spring undershirts. This is a serious matter. We've all been there, too, contemplating the hot-man-in-summer dilemma: Will I sweat more, or will it show through my dress shirt less, if I wear an undershirt? After consulting with experts, our conclusion is thus: A thin cotton undershirt will, in fact, keep you cooler in warm weather while protecting your dress shirts from your body. First, it wicks moisture away from the body, which in turn stabilizes your body temperature and maximizes comfort. Second, cotton is an inherently airy material: The fibers that make up the yarn in cotton are hollow, and this creates an additional layer of cooling air.



**The Hell Is
Breathability,
Anyway?**

IT'S ESSENTIALLY the degree to which certain fabrics let air pass in and out, and it offers two big advantages to a man in heat. The first is cooling: The more air you have passing in and out of your clothing, the cooler you'll feel and the easier you can release body heat. The second relates to moisture: As a physiological matter, human beings are constantly emitting moisture, so in addition to keeping the family jewels under wraps, clothing should allow that moisture to evaporate as quickly as possible. Because scientists can measure just about anything today, there is a measurement for breathability:

Grams of water vapor per square meter of fabric per 24-hour period (g/m²/d).

It's often abbreviated as just g, and clothing companies like Columbia and the North Face often include that information on their labels. (The higher the g-number, the better the breathability.) In the summer, the most naturally breathable fabrics are seersucker, linen, and cotton, while the worst are tightly woven fabrics like heavy denim or polyester.

**FOUR BREEDS OF UNDERSHIRT
AND A FEW THOUGHTS ON EACH ONE**



**WHITE
CREWNECK**

The good: When chosen well, covers your entire torso.

The bad: Neckline will show with an open collar. Very bad indeed. Cotton T-shirt (\$85) by Zimmerli of Switzerland; barnneys.com.



**GRAY
CREWNECK**

The good: Unlike white, won't show through lightly colored dress shirts.

The bad: We got nothin'. Cotton T-shirt (two for \$30) by Calvin Klein Underwear; ck.com.



**WHITE
V-NECK**

The good: Wear your polo or dress shirt unbuttoned with ease.

The bad: Excessive chest-hair exposure. Cotton T-shirt (\$71) by Hanro; underwearoptions.com.



**WHITE
TANK TOP**

The good: Covers the high-sweat areas of the torso.

The bad: Does nothing for your armpits. Cotton tank top (three for \$30) by 2(x)ist; freshpair.com.

The Good and Bad of Wearing White

Pros:

- Seventh-grade science, folks: White reflects light, and therefore heat, better than any color, and the lighter the shade of your clothing, the less heat it'll capture and transfer to your body.
- Helps show off your tan.

Cons:

- Broadcasts stains and sweat marks and shows even the lightest spots.
- Boasts long and complicated history with the Old South.
- Helps show off your lack of a tan.

True or False?

THE CLAIM

Loose clothing will keep you cooler than fitted clothing.

THE REALITY

It's true. Since there's more air between your body and your clothing, there's more air to cool the body. That doesn't mean baggy—it simply means looser.

No. 122

ESQUIRE'S BIG BLACK BOOK SPRING '09