

The Rise and Return of the Male Rollneck

Not just for art critics and fashion designers, the rollneck jumper is the season's key piece

By [Dale Lyster](#), Fashion Editor (2016/17)
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Take a brief look to this week's London Collection's Men and you will be inundated with models in roll necks. Though, such sudden popularity is not limited by just a half-dozen runways – from viral videos of Hotline Bling plastered across the internet to the latest covers of NME, popular culture has taken a recent inkling to the humble piece of knitwear. When did this sudden resurfacing begin? And more importantly – where did it come from?



Image: Drake embracing the rollneck in his widespread 'Hotline Bling' music video

Averagely, men's fashion can be less adventurous than women's, though it can have its difficult pieces (note: kilts). In a time of relatively tame male fashion, the roll neck has graced modern man's wardrobe with a breath of fresh air. Having previously faced much criticism for its 'uncool dad' reputation, it now seems to be the case that it has descended the family tree metaphor to the cooler older cousin that you secretly wish you were alike. Forget the Milk Tray man, forget 70s skiwear and forget Captain Birdseye – the roll neck has reinvented itself in modern popular culture to a statement piece for all.

Perhaps a segment of the return of the rollneck lies with its unquestionable versatility. From offices to red carpets, in a sea of white shirts and black ties, men are longing to be unique, whilst not completely abandoning dress codes. No longer must one bother with the farce of a shirt and tie- simply wear a rollneck under a jacket to achieve the classically dapper Bond villain look. In a similar light to the current over-sized trend, the roll-neck additionally offers a sense of security, through the ability to hide or reveal yourself as one deems fit. With the combination of practicality and warmth, add a jacket to the piece of knit and dress down formal, or wear it as it is with a pair of jeans to achieve the smart casual look. It can be dressed up or down, used as an alternative to the classic crew neck or shirt and tie combination. The roll neck spawns to cater the mass – from budget high street Primark to big-label high end Tom Ford; each of different origin, with the same unique style, to be reinterpreted to your own individual wardrobe.



Image: Left, Daniel Craig's nostalgic Spectre outfit. Right, Sir Roger Moore in Live And Let Die.

Before the decade that fashion forgot (the 1970's) came the birth and conception of the rollneck. Alike the majority of pieces in menswear's clothing canon, the roll neck was conceived as a piece for utility. In particular, for naval officers as a form of insulation during their workings. Though, perhaps today it is less for work, and more for play.

Fundamentally, the definite sphere in which the rollneck exists and thrives in the modern day is that of film. It seems accurate for one to state that this scope is where the rise and return of the rollneck truly began. Predominantly, in the sub-category of the spy genre, the now popular piece of knit has been a constant recurrence. Perhaps it is that somewhat mysteriousness that it seems to offer the wearer or simply the covering of a great deal of skin, which a spy of course opts to do in their spying, that makes it most common within this genre of film.

Take a look to the two most successful spy films of 2015 - 'Spectre' and 'The Man from Uncle', both of which, you guessed it, feature protagonists (Daniel Craig and Armie Hammer) dressed in a rollneck. In the case of the former, it pays homage back to the classic days of Bond in which he fought Spectre too, nodding to Sean Connery and Roger Moore's Bond eras. Though, in the case of the latter, it is used to create the visuals for the 1960's in which the film is set. However, both films use the classic piece of knitwear in a nostalgic manner - in trying to capture the golden age of the spy genre.



Image: Left, Armie Hammer resembles a modern twist to the rollneck in *The Man From Uncle*. Right, Topman alternative £50.

Furthermore, a notable other appearance of the rollneck in recent film is that of ‘Steve Jobs’, being used to capture the iconic style of the protagonist through Michael Fassbender’s commemorative performance.

If this weren’t enough to convince the modern man that the rollneck has truly returned to its former glory, then one thing that certainly secured the nail in the coffin is that of Drake’s *Hotline Bling*. Due to his viral dad-dancing taking the internet by storm, if anyone previously doubted that the rollneck was not once again cool after the spy genre taking it under its wing, Drake certainly clarified the rise and return of the male rollneck, as, after all, no one is cooler than Drake himself.



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