

Man Leggings

Attention all dudes: leggings aren't just for women, and wearing them isn't going to magically erase your precious masculinity.

I never realized how truly comfortable and freeing a simple pair of legging pants could feel until I decided to wear them for an entire week.

The first time I ever wore leggings was last summer when I bought a pair of running compression pants. You know the wicking kind that helps keep you cool? I absolutely loved them; they are so comfy, airy and the range of motion is ridiculous, but I never considered wearing them outside of the gym.

But as the temperature dropped, many of my female friends began breaking out their leggings and wearing them in public. Secretly I was seething with jealousy; why are they able to go to class wearing pants that feel like clouds wrapped to their legs? That's not fair. Why do guys have such limited trouser choices? Why am I stuck between wearing only khakis and jeans?

In reality, no one is telling me I have to dress a certain way. I mean, except for the Internet, my closed-minded friends, gender roles, societal norms, judgmental employers and perhaps everyone with a pair of eyes. I'm not going to lie, it's scary to run against the grain – being vulnerable enough to be judged publically.

Then, my world was rocked a little when I ran across a pic of Jaden Smith in a dress, a real life dress, the same exact dress that style icon Lady GaGa had worn.

I was shocked.

Then it hit me: "If Jaden Smith can rock a dress and not care,

then I can wear leggings.”

What I was actually beginning to discover is that fashion, in all senses, is truly androgynous. Fashion is art for your body, and I’m pretty sure people weren’t telling Van Gogh his portraits were too feminine for a male painter.

Sadly, this realization did not give me all the courage I needed to walk into the women’s section and start trying on leggings. (Also sadly, they don’t really sell leggings for guys, but I have hopes that will change someday). Fortunately, my good, open-minded friends took me with them and helped me navigate the scary “other side” of clothing stores.

In the end, I bought two pairs of leggings: a pair of plain black ones and a pair of red, lumberjack-plaid ones. From the minute I popped my slightly-larger foot through the smaller ankle hole, I knew I wasn’t going to care what others thought. I was really comfy and free.

Last week I wore leggings to my editorial meetings, I wore them to a concert, I wore them when I went to restaurants, I wore them to the bar and I even wore them to church. Gasp!

Guess what? Not a single person seemed to care. No disgusted looks, no snide remarks, not even a disguised comment. They didn’t care if I was wearing leggings, and neither did I. This level of empowerment felt dangerous, both my legs and my hippie spirit felt free and wild.

Yet, over the course of the week I ran into a few drawbacks. The biggest problem arose when I tried to make sure I wasn’t showcasing any packages I didn’t want shipped or handled.

I had to make sure things were tucked away so they wouldn’t be super visible, or I had to find ways to cover that area up. Neither was super hard. To cover up the no-nos, just wear a long shirt or sweater, a long scarf or sport athletic shorts over top of the leggings.

In the case of leggings, the pros vastly outweigh the cons. The cons might be the fear of judgment and perhaps some accidental bulge action, but the pros include feeling incredibly comfy, having an increased range of motion, looking slimmer and adding a huge variety of outfit choices.

You have so many options with leggings. You can look sporty with some Nikes and basketball shorts, or you can look like a NYC Fashion Week model with a larger jacket and army green leggings. You can wear boots, Toms, some white Vans or Converse. I'm not kidding you, the options are pretty limitless.

In spite of all the open-minded reasons I just gave, I know some of you are saying, "Joe, leggings are for girls. You aren't a girl."

I've got one thing to say to this: who cares? Leggings are much more than just feeling good, or showing off your body. They are quickly becoming a very integral part of the fashion world.

Fashion is much more than trying to just look good. Fashion is about art, creativity, expression and experimentation, not about gender or trying to fit in. So be different sometimes, try something new and you just might love the way you look. Do not let the Internet or your friends tell you otherwise.