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## Pockets, Pockets, Pockets

by  
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Pockets, pockets, pockets... Have you ever bought a pair of pants, put them on, and then go to put something in the pocket and discover there is no pocket? Can you actually imagine a pair of pants without pockets? I'm speaking especially to guys here because we all know a guy needs a place to put his stuff and other than a Chevy S-10 Truck, pockets are the perfect place. I mean... what in the world are they thinking of when they create a pair of pants without pockets... that's like buying a fishing pole with no fishing line. One naturally goes with the other... and can't function without the other.

Please allow me to digress for a short while... The thought just went through my mind... why are they called a "*pair of pants*" anyway and why am I calling them "*they*" when I'm only talking about one garment here? Why don't we say... "*Put on your pant?*" Wouldn't that make more sense? Is it because we have two legs that fit in the one "**Pant**" thereby making it, or them, a plural noun? What about those who for some reason only have one leg... should they refer to their trousers, or trouser, as a pant. Does that logic carry over when talking about slacks... should it be "Put on your slack?" It's still just one garment. Somebody help me here... I'm drowning.

Never mind, let's continue talking about pockets. Are pockets something we just take for granted and assume they were always there and will always be there? How did they come about anyhow? What did they do in the pre-pocket era? Do you realize that there are actually some people who don't like pockets and that pockets are pretty much a cyclical thing as we go through life?

Think about it from a guy's perspective. When we're babies we certainly don't need pockets, but as we grow into adolescence we can't seem to do without them... I mean, without pockets where would we guys, as little boys put our frogs and lizards and things. I've had mothers who said they're actually afraid to reach into their boys' pockets on wash day for fear of what they might find. Besides the wiggly creatures, one mother found a rather nice mud ball her son had put in his pocket to save.

As we grow into adulthood we guys use the pockets but, of course, we don't depend on them as much... except for a place to keep our handkerchief, and wallet, and money clip, and extra change, and knife, and extra paper clips, and our genuine NASA space age ball point pen, and gum we've finished with then wrapped in its original paper, and credit card receipts, and business cards people give us, and scraps of paper we pick up off the floor and don't have a trash receptacle nearby, and a comb, and napkins on which we've written notes to ourselves... okay, okay, so we guys don't ever stop using our pockets. But that's alright... pockets are our friends. Just think, at our age, just how nice a pocket feels to a cold hand looking for a place to hide.

Believe it or not pockets aren't as old as we might think, but neither are they as recent as we might think. Anna Sheehan of central Oregon is somewhat of a clothing historian and she provided a treasure trove of information on pockets. In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries of Europe it became the norm for not only countries but kings, princes, dukes and bishops chose to coin their own money, for whatever reason. Naturally, that meant one must have a convenient and safe place to carry those coins so the obvious solution was pockets...? **Wrong!** It was leather or cloth bags (purses) tied around one's belt. However, because this was easy for pickpockets to cut away and run with, these purses were put inside the pants, still tied to the belt. This solution was found to be too difficult to retrieve the coins without dropping your pants in public, so some enterprising person began cutting slits in the clothing to allow access to the purse. It wasn't until around the late 1700s, according to Ms. Sheehan, that tailors and family seamstresses began to sew pockets right into trousers and dresses and the idea seemed to take hold. Thank goodness... I would hate to have to drop my trousers whenever I needed change for my soda pop.

By the way, ladies, cleaning out pockets of your children (or husbands) seems to have been an age old custom. Archeological digs around a known washing site in Cape Town, South Africa has turned up many artifacts which were thought to be dropped from the pockets of the clothing being washed. What they recovered helped give an insight into the culture of the times.

Okay, lesson learned by everyone? Pockets are a very important part of our society and could reveal many things of interest to generations to come, so let's stop taking them for granted and enjoy the ones we have. Until next week... have a great life.

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