British men are simply not keeping up appearances

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Latest research from MINTEL finds British men subscribing to the age old adage that 'less is more', when it comes to personal grooming. Today, just one in five (19%) men are enthusiastic about toiletries and use these products to improve their appearance, so fitting the much publicised 'Metrosexual' bill. In actual fact, men are far more likely (43%) to be part of the 'Retrosexual' movement, turning their backs on the plethora of men's toiletries, opting instead for the bare minimum of products and a basic routine.

For many men, speed is clearly of the essence as over half (55%) spend under 15 minutes in the bathroom showering and grooming, with a staggering three in ten (27%), nipping in and out in under 10 minutes.

"For more than a decade, the industry has been predicting strong growth for men's grooming products, based on the premise that men are taking greater care over their personal appearance. The reality is that the significant Â£685 million market has grown by a more modest 20% over the past five years, as men are only tentatively embracing a wider range of products formerly associated with women," explains James McCoy, Senior Market Analyst at MINTEL.

On the whole, the majority (53%) of men view their grooming routine merely as a way of maintaining good personal hygiene and many (42%) simply want to feel fresh and clean. On top of this almost two in five (38%) claim to use only the bare minimum of products.

"Maintaining good personal hygiene and feeling fresh and clean are the two central planks of men's grooming routine. In contrast to women, men are more likely to opt for more practical and functional products rather than products for the sake of pampering. This suggests that, for men, 'it works' rather than 'because you're worth it' is likely to hit the right emotional buttons," comments James McCoy.

The weighty issues of being a man

Surprisingly, half of British men worry about their weight, rising to an astounding 63% of 45-54-year-olds. Apart from weight issues, the other main concerns men worry about relate to personal freshness, with bad breath and body odour the causing the most stress.

In terms of a basic daily routine, the majority take a shower or bath (94%), wash their hair and face and clean their teeth (90%), but some tasks are perhaps not as common-place as many may think. Surprisingly, only 66% use a deodorant regularly, implying that as many as 34% do not. It is those aged 55 years and over who are the real culprits here. This is ironic, considering that as many as two in three men (38%) are concerned about body odour.

On the whole, men seem very unconcerned about being overly hairy. Just 16% say that they are concerned about bushy eyebrows or excessive nose and ear hair and a mere 4% worry about excessive body hair.

"Weight, bad breath and body odour are the three main concerns for men in terms of their self-image. In fact there are a lot of products out there to help with these problems, but it is education which needs to be an important part of marketing strategies, especially with young people. As these are potentially embarrassing issues, the privacy of the Internet is a good way of targeting this group." comments James McCoy.

With tasks as basic as putting on deodorant still not a part of every man's daily routine, it may not come as a surprise to find out that skincare regimes are even less popular. Just one in five (22%) use a facial moisturiser and one in 20 use a facial toner (4%) or facial scrub (5%).

What a chore

Shaving comes out on top, as the activity that men are most likely to find a chore, with some 40% feeling this way. The next most boring activity is trimming nails, with 20% unenthusiastically reaching for the clippers.

Men find shaving a chore more than any other part of their grooming routine, as it can be time-consuming and leave skin feeling sore and dry. Younger men are most likely to dislike shaving, probably because they are starting to incorporate daily shaving into their routine as they need to be clean-shaven at work.

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