

Breaking Boundaries: The Rise of Gender-Neutral Fashion

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Gender-neutral fashion is not just a passing trend—it's a cultural evolution. India Today underscores this by tracing modern-day genderless dressing back to South Asian sartorial traditions. Garments like dhotis, agharkhas, saris, and turbans historically transcended gender lines, long before Western colonial influences rewove fashion narratives. Even mythical symbolism backfills this legacy: the icon of Ardhanarishvara—half Shiva, half Shakti—has embodied fluidity and balance in Indian consciousness for ages.

The Global Arc: From Avant-Garde to Mass Appeal

Western fashion's quest for less rigid identity found voice in the avant-garde movements of the '80s and '90s, led by designers like Rei Kawakubo and Yohji Yamamoto. Their creations challenged gender norms through sculptural, deconstructed silhouettes that were more about feeling than categorization.

Fast forward to today, and even functional categories—motorcycling gear, outdoor apparel—are being reimagined with neutral-purpose design: adjustable fits, layered systems, and performance-first principles over gendered marketing riffs.

India's Rebirth: Heritage, Designers, and Street Style

Indian fashion has always floated beyond the gender spectrum, but now designers are reviving this legacy with modern twists. Visionary labels like Raw Mango, Torani, and NorBlack NorWhite weave inclusivity into their ethos—revamping traditional drapes and cuts as unisex statements.

Gen Z is driving this exploration: oversized boxy T-shirts, relaxed trousers, and unisex hoodies dominate Indian street style—an aesthetic that rejects gendered “shelf logic” in favor of personal flair.

Ethnic—androgyny is also emerging; neutral-toned kurtas, Pathani suits, and Indo-Western shararas/dhotis are finding favor across identities, signaling a new mainstream for inclusive traditional wear.

Voices of Change: Icons, Creators, and Expression

Fashion and cultural icons fuel this movement. Designers like Chola the Label and Shore (Sohaya Misra, Biskit) bring minimalist, gender-neutral designs rooted in comfort and identity-aligned aesthetics.

Celebrity visibility amplifies impact—Bollywood stars like Ranveer Singh challenge expectations with flamboyant silhouettes, while Gen Z influencers blur style norms daily.

Even legendary names make statements—last month, 59-year-old Milind Soman donned a white knit dress in Harper's Bazaar India. It wasn't a stunt but an expression: fashion without limits.

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