

TALIT (GADOL)

TALIT GADOL: DESCRIPTION

Talit Gadol: Size

The minimum size for a talit gadol is so you could put it over your head and wrap your body in it (even though this is not how you must wear it!).

Talit Gadol: Material

A talit gadol (or a talit katan) must be made from at least 51% natural fibers.

Talit Gadol: Color

A talit should be primarily white. Here are some details:

- A talit gadol should be either all white or white with black stripes. Avoid a very colorful talit that makes the white part look insignificant.
- Blue stripes used to be used: as with techelet, the blue reminds us of the sky, of God's throne (kisei ha'kavod), and of God.
- Even though the talit was originally supposed to have blue stripes, it is not the custom today to use blue stripes.
- Black stripes have no significance or importance.

Talit Gadol: Tzitzit Placement

Like all tzitzit, tzitzit on a talit gadol must hang over the edge of the talit and not hang down from the bottom (see diagram).



The tzitzit should hang down along the vertical border (screen left/model's right side)

TALIT GADOL: WHY

Talit Gadol: Mitzva

Men wear a talit as a mitzva (wearing a four-cornered garment in order to wear tzitzit).

Talit Gadol: Form of Honor

It is a form of honor for the congregation for the leader to dress up (some congregations have the custom of requiring the leader to wear a jacket for mincha for this reason). A talit is usually the form of dressing up for all men during prayer services.

Talit Gadol: Humility

When a person speaks directly to God, it is very important to demonstrate humility. Since the Talmud says that covering one's head is a form of humility (and that learned Jews/talmidei chachamim used to cover their heads), men who wear a talit for prayer should ideally use it to cover their heads whenever they wear it, but the minimum is during the amida.

TALIT GADOL: WHEN TO WEAR

Talit Gadol: Amida

A talit is required only when saying the amida prayer, but the universal custom (for men who wear talitot!) is to wear the talit during the entire shacharit service.

NOTE A talit is worn for shacharit, musaf, and all day and night on Yom Kippur; it is not commonly worn for mincha or ma'ariv (except on Yom Kippur).

Talit Gadol: Prayer Leader during Amida Repetition

A prayer leader should be especially careful to cover his head when saying the reader's repetition of the amida. A hatless prayer leader covers his head with the talit gadol during the private amida (also during the public amida and repetition). If wearing a hat, he does not cover his head with the talit.

Talit Gadol with Talit Katan

Wear a talit gadol even though you are already wearing a talit katan, as a means of honoring the prayers.

Talit Gadol: Married Men

Once a man has been married, he must wear a talit when saying shacharit and musaf, even if he becomes widowed or divorced.

Talit Gadol: Mincha

When wearing a talit at mincha Torah reading--such as for an aliya, hagbaha, or glila--you do not need to wear it until after kedusha, but some people have that custom.

TALIT GADOL: BLESSING

Talit Gadol: Which Blessing

The blessing over putting on the talit gadol is lehit'ateiph ba'tzitzit.

Talit Gadol: What the Blessing Covers

Saying the blessing on a talit gadol, while intending to cover all other talitot (whether talit katan or talit gadol), will cover:

- All talitot that you already put on.
- All talitot that you will put on later that day.
- If you go out of whichever building you are in when you say the blessing on your talit, you must say a new blessing if you put on a talit (even the same talit) in a different building.

EXCEPTION You may intend for the blessing NOT to cover other talitot.

EXAMPLE You say the blessing over your talit gadol on the morning preceding Yom Kippur. You may intend for your blessing not to cover the talit gadol that you will put on just before Kol Nidrei.

NOTE If you don't have a talit gadol, say al mitzvat tzitzit over your talit katan.

NOTE If you remove your talit gadol, go to a different building, and put the talit gadol on again, you DO say a new blessing.

Talit Gadol: Placing Talit on Head

Placing the talit gadol over your head while saying the talit blessing is a halacha, but wearing it on your head any other time is a custom.

Talit Gadol: Replacing One You Removed by Choice

Do not say a new blessing when you replace a talit that you chose to take off, with the intention of putting it back on (such as removing it to go to the bathroom).

Talit Gadol: Replacing One that Fell Off

Say a new blessing when you replace a talit gadol that fell off your body completely (not just if it slipped off one shoulder).

Talit Gadol: Blessing when Borrowed for Aliya/Prayer Leader

If you borrow a talit, such as for an aliya or to serve as prayer leader, it is not customary to say a blessing on it.

NOTE If you want to say a blessing on a borrowed talit, ask the owner to “give” it to you as a gift, which you will later give back as a gift.

Talit Gadol: Blessing on Loaned or Borrowed

Do not say a new blessing when you put back on your talit gadol that you loaned someone if you are at the same prayer service.

Talit Gadol: Blessing between Bar'chu and Amida

SITUATION You began shacharit on your way to synagogue and are between bar'chu and the amida when you arrive. You have not yet put on a talit.

WHAT TO DO

- Put on a talit immediately.
- Say the blessing on the talit after you finish the amida.

Talit Gadol: Blessing over Public Talit

You may say the blessing on a public talit gadol available at the synagogue, even though it is not your talit.

REASON It is assumed that the talitot at synagogues are there to be used by anyone.

Talit Gadol: Blessing Once Married

Once a man is married and wears a talit gadol, he stops saying the blessing on tzitzit on his talit katan; it is covered by the blessing on his talit gadol.

TALIT GADOL: HOW TO PUT ON

Talit Gadol: Putting on in Morning

To put on a talit in the morning:

- Say the blessing lehit'ateiph ba'tzitzit.
- Put the garment over your head and down to your nose.

- Gather the two tzi_ziyot from the right side and the front one from the left side and swing them over your left shoulder (you do not need to bunch up the talit before doing so).
- Wait for at least 2 ½ seconds and say the appropriate verses (see a siddur for the text).

TALIT GADOL: HOW TO CARE FOR

Talit Gadol: Folding, Rolling, Hanging

You do not need to fold a talit after using it; you may roll it or hang it up. The only requirement is that you take care of it and don't crumple it or treat it disrespectfully.