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For Economic Indicators, Mind The Manties

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Alan Greenspan always knew how to find out where the economy was headed: in the men's underwear department. And if the former Federal Reserve chairman is to be believed, we're headed for more financial trouble.

Greenspan was known for using odd measures to determine how the economy was doing, and one of his most famous indicators was the sale of men's underwear, **reports** *The Huffington Post*. Robert Krulwich, who published Greenspan's book, *The Age of Turbulence* said:

"If you look at sales of male underpants it's just pretty much a flat line, it hardly ever changes ... But on those few occasions where it dips that means that men are so pinched that they are deciding not to replace underpants. And [Greenspan] said 'that is almost always a prescient, forward impression that here comes trouble.'"

According to global research company Mintel, the sale of men's underwear in the United States is currently experiencing a fairly large drop. A new study projects a 2.3 percent drop in sales of all men's underwear products in 2009. Just six months ago, Mintel predicted sales would increase by 2.6 percent in 2009.

Matt Hall, A spokesmen for Hanesbands Inc. explained the drop, saying:

"Recessions impact all categories and men's underwear sales are no different... Men's underwear is a replenishment item. If you see a dip in the market it is because of the economy. But over a longer-term period it will even out. They tend to be later going into the recession and earlier

coming back... Men certainly aren't wearing underwear less frequently than before."

While men just getting by with the worn out underwear they already have isn't a particularly appealing thought, there is some good news on the men's underwear front. Earlier, we learned that [the sale of pink briefs](#) for men is way up this year, and it seems that when men *do* decide to splurge on a new pair of undies, they want them to make a statement. The new trend is for the waistband on men's underwear to have bold colors, patterns, larger widths, and oversized logos, [according to New York Magazine](#). Some have compared it to how research shows women will spend even more on lipstick, hosiery, and other cheap but mood-enhancing products during an economic slump. Apparently men feel a little boost when there's a fashionable design poking out over their pants. Michael Kleinmann, president of underwear company Freshpair.com explains, "They used to be pretty basic, but now they are like sneakers: their fun colors and patterns say something about the guy that is wearing them."

[Image via [FreshPair.com](#).]

[Men's Underwear Sales, Greenspan's Economic Metric Reveal Crisis](#) [The Huffington Post]

[Statement Mantis Are The New Sneakers](#) [New York Magazine]

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