

Dressing for an Interview

While business casual is still in, dressing up in a suit for a job interview has really never gone out of style. Appropriate attire supports your image and you should understand the nature of the dress code in the industry in which you are trying to become employed. Research shows that within 4-9 minutes of an interview the recruiter decides whether or not to seriously consider you for the position partly based on your appearance, which is an important factor in the decision-making process.

Dress recommendations for traditional business settings (banking, law, consulting, insurance, etc.)

Women

Well-fitted two-piece matched suit, blouse, pantsuit, or skirt with hosiery and basic dark flats or low pumps. Choose a dark or neutral shade like black, navy, brown or gray for your suit. Wear plain style, non-patterned hosiery; minimal or natural-looking makeup; and clean nails or clear nail polish that is not chipped. Nail length should not be excessively long. Minimize jewelry - avoid dangling earrings and wear no more than one ring per hand and a dress watch. Jewelry, scarves and other accessories will add a polished touch to any outfit. Do not carry a purse with a briefcase. As a precaution, take an extra pair of hose in case of a run. Perfume should be minimal or not worn at all.

Men

Well-fitted suit in navy, gray, or black (pinstripe or solid) or navy blazer and gray dress slacks; white or light blue dress shirt; tie (silk or silk-like) that contrasts with the color of your suit and contains understated patterns; dark socks (mid-calf) and dress shoes (lace-up, or leather slip-ons in either black or brown); leather belt that matches your shoes. A full-length coat, as nice as you can afford, can be worn over your suit. Avoid flashy cuff links, rings and neck chains. No earrings. Your belt should match your shoes. If you have a beard or mustache, it should be clean and neatly trimmed. Cologne should be minimal or not worn at all.

Dress recommendations for other settings (education, nonprofit, etc.)

Women

A two-piece matched suit or conservatively tailored dress with or without a jacket, or a jacket, skirt and blouse; hose and basic dark flats or low pumps. Choose a dark or neutral shade like black, navy, brown or gray for your suit. No extreme high slits. Minimal jewelry, scarves and other accessories will add a polished touch to any outfit. Nail length should not be excessively long. Wear plain style, non-patterned hosiery; minimal or natural-looking makeup; and clean nails or clear nail polish that is not chipped. Perfume should be minimal or not worn at all.

Men

Dress slacks (navy, dark gray and black) plus sport coat (wool or wool/polyester blend) or navy blazer; dress shirt, tie (silk or silk-like); white or light blue shirts are safest for most settings, but other solid, high quality cotton shirts can also be worn; dark socks (mid-calf) and dress shoes, tassel loafers, wing tip or laced shoes preferred. Cologne should be minimal or not worn at all. Avoid flashy cuff links, rings and neck chains. No earrings. Your belt should match your shoes. If you have a beard or mustache, it should be clean and neatly trimmed

Don'ts of Interviewing Dressing

- ⌚ No visible body piercings beyond conservative ear piercing
- ⌚ No stale breath...well-brushed teeth and breath
- ⌚ No gum, candy, or other objects in your mouth
- ⌚ No flashy or excessive jewelry
- ⌚ No body odor – use deodorant
- ⌚ No skirts above the knee-length
- ⌚ No revealing or seductive clothing
- ⌚ No pastel-colored suits or flowered fabrics
- ⌚ No short sleeve shirts or “ties that tell a story” for men
- ⌚ No unpolished shoes