



Choosing Your Wardrobe



Once you've analyzed the job description, anticipated the most likely questions, and developed and practiced your interview stories and answers, it is time for the *finishing touches*.

While it's what's inside that's most important, a professional presentation is also essential.

On a job interview, your attire choices can mean the difference between a **great first impression** and a negative one.

Your interviewer will make an initial judgment about you before you get to say a word. That's why it's so important to convey a professional appearance and choose your interview attire carefully, even when interviewing at a company with laid-back dress code.

In general, it's hard to go wrong with a polished business suit for a professional interview. Even if you know the company has a relaxed dress code, it's important to remember that you **don't have the job yet**.

If you are interviewing at a firm with a highly creative and casual culture, you may be able to get away without wearing a suit as long as you choose a business-like outfit and look put-together.

When in doubt, it's better to err toward a **more conservative** outfit. You can show them your trendier attire after you get the position.

What to Wear for a Job Interview:

Job Interview Dressing for Men: Interview Attire Guidelines

Business suit – Darker colors generally look more professional.

Long-sleeved shirt – White is your best choice.

Belt — Choose a dark color that coordinates with your suit and shoes.

Tie – Don't go with anything too daring, solid colors or pin stripes look best.

Shoes — Wear black or dark brown dress shoes with dark socks.

Jewelry – Limit jewelry to a wedding ring and a watch (leave the pinky ring home).

Hair – Hair should be neatly trimmed and combed (beards, goatees or mustaches should also be well groomed).

Accessories — Carry a professional-looking briefcase or portfolio.

Other – Go light on the aftershave and make sure your nails are neatly trimmed.

Job Interview Dressing for Women: Interview Attire Guidelines

Suit — Wear a business suit in a dark color. For a conservative environment, opt for a skirt suit with a skirt that is at least knee-length. A professional-looking pants suit is also acceptable in most modern offices.

Shirt — Select a blouse that coordinates with the suit and doesn't show cleavage.

Shoes — Keep the shoes conservative — no stilettos, open toes or bright colors.

Jewelry — Choose only one or two quality conservative pieces.

Hosiery — Wear stockings in a neutral color with a skirt suit, knee-highs or trouser socks with pants.

Hair — Keep your hairstyle simple and elegant. Consider an up-do or polished ponytail. Touch up those roots if you color your hair. In all cases, make sure your hair is clean and neat.

Make-up — Keep your make-up light, your fragrance subtle, and your nails manicured.

Accessories — Carry a professional-looking briefcase or portfolio

What NOT to Wear (or Bring... or Do):

Don't chew gum (or anything else).

Leave your cell phone in the car, along with your iPod. If you took public transportation, put your iPod and cell phone away inside your briefcase or portfolio and make sure your phone is turned off .

Cover up your tattoos until you've wowed them with your skills and personality.

Piercings - If you are pierced anywhere but in your ears, leave the jewelry at home for the first interview at least (*again, until you've impressed with your other qualities*). The idea isn't to force you to conform, but to avoid snap judgments that can hurt your chances.

Consider buying something new for a big interview. A new suit, shirt, or tie can give you an extra boost of confidence.

Take the time to get your clothes together the night before. Clean, steam, and de-lint wherever necessary. You don't want to be worrying about wardrobe malfunctions on the day of the interview. Prepare ahead of time so you can relax and focus on practicing your responses to the interview questions.

It's all common sense, and you can reveal your unique clothing and jewelry preferences once you have made a solid first impression.