

## Dress for Success

Employers judge you on the way you are dressed. They look at your exterior as a representation of your interior. If it is obvious that you took the time to choose the right clothes for the interview, it is likely that you will put the same amount of thought into your work. The rules of dress for both men and women are very specific and should be strictly followed.

**Conservative Rules the Day.** You will want to wear something that makes the interviewer think “professional” and “competent.” Choose something that avoids directing the focus away from you and onto your clothes. Your aim is to be dressed slightly more formally than your interviewer.

Select something that makes you feel good and is comfortable (particularly for long interview days). Avoid wearing something brand-new – halfway through the interview you don’t want to find yourself limping around on blistered feet or trying to keep the scarf from slipping off your neck.

**For Men:** If you are interviewing for a professional position, you should always wear a suit! There is no exception to this rule. A shirt and tie might make you the best-dressed guy at your current job, but it won’t cut it in an interview. Choosing conservative colors such as black, navy blue, or charcoal gray are the best. Bright and flashy colors will only serve to distract the interviewer from what you are saying. You can change the look of a conservative colored suit dramatically by changing the tie, the shirt, or both. If you only have one suit, these changes can help you out tremendously when you’re interviewing with companies that require two or more interviews.

**For Women:** The rules of proper workplace attire for women have been changing throughout the past several decades. The “power suit” that once ruled the scene has been replaced with the traditional pantsuit that doesn’t differ much from the men’s version. Still, the rules of job interview dress have not caught up with workplace appropriateness. Professionalism still dictates that women wear a skirt to an interview. The length of the skirt, obviously, should be tasteful and professional. Knee length is always appropriate. Colors should be conservative. A black or navy blue skirt and jacket is the best choice.

**Grooming Counts.** An expensive suit will not compensate for dirty fingernails, messy hair, and wrinkled clothes. Good grooming indicates attention to detail and respect for others. Your nails should be well manicured and clean. Men’s nails should be short. Women’s nails should be of a reasonable length and polished in a neutral color. Men need to be clean-shaven, even if it means going home prior to your interview for a quick shave. Make sure your shoes are shined.

**Look professional, not provocative.** Don’t overdo the perfume or aftershave. Women should not wear excessive makeup. Your hairstyle should not overwhelm your face and should allow the interviewer to see your eyes. Limit the amount of jewelry you wear and do not wear dangling jewelry. Avoid clothes that are too tight, you’ll be less comfortable and you won’t be taken as seriously.

**Know where you are going.** You need to know exactly where you are going. If you are unfamiliar with the area, drive to the company location before you actually have to meet for the interview. Map out the directions and time how long it takes for you to get there. Add a few extra minutes for traffic or other unforeseen holdup. Plan on arriving for the interview at least 5 to 10 minutes early. If you arrive early, wait outside until the appropriate time. If you arrive too early, the interviewer might feel pressure knowing someone is waiting. This could affect your interview.

### JOB INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

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|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resume       | <input type="checkbox"/> Pen or pencil        | <input type="checkbox"/> Spare tie (men)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cover letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Driver’s license     | <input type="checkbox"/> Pantyhose (women) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> References   | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security card | <input type="checkbox"/> Be on TIME        |