

How to Dress for Success

During an interview, you want your experience and qualifications to shine. Your appearance should enhance your presentation, not overwhelm or diminish it.

At an interview, dress appropriately. Your attire should convey professionalism. You need clean, fitted business attire. Avoid anything too flashy or over-the-top. The general rule of thumb is to dress on the more conservative side. It is better to be overdressed than underdressed.

Dressing Business Casual

“Office Casual” is becoming the accepted mode of dress at more and more companies, however casual dress is different for each company. The safest fashion rule for new employees to follow is dress about the same as your most conservatively attired co-worker. As a new hire, don’t try to push the boundaries of casual attire.

Play It Safe: 1) Chinos or corduroy slacks are usually a safe bet for both sexes; 2) As for formal business attire, buy the best that your budget will allow; 3) If you will be seeing clients, dress appropriately for their workplace, not yours; 4) Go to the mall--most department stores have sections devoted to this style of office attire.

Fashion Arrests: 1) Never wear blue denim jeans or shorts unless the vast majority of others do; 2) Don’t dress too provocatively; 3) Casual doesn’t mean sloppy--your clothes should always be free of stains or holes; 4) Workout wear belongs at the gym

A Final Check

(Your appearance is only as good as your grooming)
Create a final checklist to review before you go on an interview:

- Neatly trimmed hair
- Conservative makeup
- No runs in stockings
- Shoes polished
- No excessive jewelry; men should refrain from wearing earrings
- No missing buttons, crooked ties or lint
- Clean hands and fingernails

Proper Interview Attire

- W** ① A suit with a knee-length skirt and a tailored blouse
- O** ② Blouses should be conservative. Refrain from low necklines.
- M** ③ Minimal accessories. Modest jewelry and makeup.
- E** ④ Closed-toed shoes and flesh-colored panty hose

- M** ① Matching two-piece suit in navy, black, or gray (pinstripe or solid)
- E** ② Light-colored, long-sleeved dress shirt in solid conservative colors
- N** ③ Tie should coordinate with jacket and pants, but contrast with shirt
- ④ Wear polished shoes with calf-length colored socks that match shoes

FAQ's about Dressing For Success

Q. *I have an interview scheduled, and they told me that I could dress in business casual. What should I wear?*

A. Even though an employer tells you that you can wear business casual attire, it is highly recommended that you dress in formal attire. It demonstrates professionalism and maturity.

Q. *I can't afford a really expensive suit, and I know I have to wear one for interviews, what should I do?*

A. There are many stores available that sell quality suits at discounted prices, (See list below). Sometimes, students borrow their friend's suit if they have an interview soon and are not able to go shopping at the last minute. However, this is not recommended as your friend's suit may fit you differently. Also, eventually you will be going on numerous interviews, therefore, it is recommended that you invest in one that fits you properly. Women may purchase a suit jacket with a matching skirt and pants to create two suits.



Q. *What if the recruiter(s) or company employees dress casually during career fairs or on-campus interviews?*

A. Employers want to see if you are able to represent yourself professionally. Therefore, it is recommended that you wear formal attire. However, once you are hired you will dress according to your company's standards.

Q. *Can I wear a shirt and tie without a jacket?*

A. Wearing a shirt and tie without a jacket would be considered "business casual" and is not appropriate for interviews. However, depending on the company's dress code, that attire would be suitable once you get hired.

Q. *As a woman, should I wear a skirt suit or a pantsuit?*

A. Although skirt suits are more traditional for the first interview, it is now becoming more acceptable to wear pantsuits.

Where To Shop

Major department stores – Macy's, Robinsons May, JC Penny, Nordstrom, Bloomingdales, etc.

Men's Wearhouse (Men)

The Limited (women)

Ann Taylor Loft (women)

Banana Republic (men and women)

Steinmart (men and women)

Marshalls (men and women)

TJ Maxx (men and women)

Mervyn's (men and women)

Loehmann's (men and women)

Ross Dress for Less (for accessories) (men and women)

Helpful Websites

www.quintcareers.com/dress_for_success.html

www.collegegrad.com/book/15-5.shtml

www.dressforsuccess.org/

amdt.wsu.edu/research/dti/Women.html

www.canoe.ca/LifewiseWorkEtiquette/eti_work6.html

