

Interview Dress

The most important guideline to follow in dressing for job interviews is simple: Dress to fit the job and the job's culture. Your clothing needs to send the message to those in the organization that you belong in that environment. Clothing is work-related costuming, not an outlet for self-expression.

Look the part, and the part plays itself. Most career counselors and legal recruiters say that dressing conservatively is the safest route. If in doubt, research the norm for a company or firm -- go there and see what they wear. Dress the best you're ever going to look in the job you want in that company.

You are on stage the minute you walk through the interviewer's door. Projecting a professional image is most important, not reflecting your own personal style. Present yourself as one of "them." Some employers make a subconscious hiring decision within seconds of meeting a candidate and spend the rest of the interview validating their initial impression. With this in mind, make certain your appearance is professional.

Women:

- Wear light makeup
- Clean and well-manicured nails
- If worn, nail polish without chips in clear or light colors is preferred
- Check hosiery for runs (Coordinate hosiery color with shoes – don't make hose a focal point)
- Shined/polished shoes, in good repair – 1 ½" – 2" heel
- "Coordinated" outfits should include pieces (jacket, skirt or pants) made to match (by the same designer)
- Jewelry should be simple and conservative – no dangling earrings, glittery looks or multiple piercings
- Avoid wearing fragrances – many work environments are fragrance-free

Success Dressing for Women:

A suit is a more powerful statement for women, whereas a dress and jacket are softer. To maximize your image as an authoritative professional, choose a conservative business suit with a skirt at mid-knee or below. (The best lengths are 1 ½ inches above or below the knee or tea

length.) Pants suits are also acceptable. Use professional-looking scarves and jewelry to add interest.

Avoid wearing red and other bold colors. Best colors to wear include navy, gray or black, or perhaps brown or beige. Solids are best for suits. Choose simple silk or cotton light-colored blouses or a silk print with a small, even pattern. Blouse sleeves should be just below the wrist bone or at the bend of hand. Complement your outfit with medium-heeled pumps and non-textured hosiery.

Men:

- Have a clean-shaven look or neatly trimmed facial hair
- Over-the-calf dark socks (match the suit)
- Pockets should not be bulging
- When wearing a belt or belt loops, do not use suspenders
- Suits should be tailored to fit you well
- Shined/polished shoes, in good repair
- Matching shoes and belt colors (navy/black/gray suit = black belt & shoes;
brown/camel/beige suit = brown belt & shoes)
- Jewelry – keep it simple and conservative
- Clean/groomed nails

Success Dressing for Men:

The power look for men is a suit: often navy blue, medium to dark gray or black. To show less authority, brown, camel or beige is acceptable. Suits that are 100% wool look and wear better than any other material. A white shirt or pale complementary colors are best. Always wear a cotton, long-sleeved shirt, with cuffs extending $\frac{1}{4}$ " below the suit sleeve. Cotton/polyester blends are acceptable, but the higher the cotton content, the better the look.

Choose a silk or high-quality blend tie in a conservative stripe or classic design. Your tie should complement and add color to your suit – 100% silk ties make the most professional impact. The tie width should be about the same as the lapel ($2\frac{3}{4}$ " – $3\frac{1}{2}$ " wide). Shoes should be leather -- black and cordovan are the best colors.

If unsure of what to wear, call the receptionist at the company or organization, say you're coming in for an interview soon and want to dress appropriately. Then ask specifically what the attorneys, partners, managers, executives, supervisors or those you will be meeting with wear.

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Career Services

If you are told “business casual,” ask for clarification on what that means. It is vastly different at different organizations and in different areas of the country.

For Everyone:

- Avoid tinted glasses and fad watches
- Use quality writing pens, rather than disposable types
- Be neat and clean
- Censor your breath (use spray, mint or mouth wash)
- Be sure fingernails are clean and well manicured
- Avoid scruffy shoes: have polished shoes with well-maintained heels
- Avoid wearing fragrances – many work environments are fragrance-free
- Carry extra copies of your resume, reference list and writing sample in a leather folder/portfolio. (Offer them only if asked.)

*For additional assistance, visit the Office of Career Services, rm. 116 (first floor of the law center), or schedule an appointment with a Career Counselor.