



INTERVIEW ATTIRE: WHAT TO WEAR

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INTERVIEW PREPARATION RESOURCE

WHAT DO I WEAR TO AN INTERVIEW?

An interview is an opportunity for employers to assess potential candidates. As a candidate, how you present yourself will leave an impression on the interviewers; this includes how you dress.

Interviews can be a stressful experience for many people, so as much as possible, try to ensure that you feel comfortable in the clothes you are wearing so that you can stay focused during the interview.

Are there any common dress code rules or expectations?

In general, interview clothing tends to include more neutral colours and styles, rather than more bold or colourful outfits and accessories. Neutral colours can include navy blue, greys, browns, cream, and other less vibrant hues. Closed-toe shoes are also commonly worn – these can include oxfords, flats, and low heels, but typically exclude athletic shoes. Leveraging cosmetics and accessories is your personal choice; choose styles that support you in feeling more polished and comfortable. While colognes and perfume are acceptable, try to avoid strong scents as people may have fragrance sensitivities.

The most important rule to keep in mind is that dress codes may vary by industry. It can therefore be helpful to observe how professionals in your chosen field tend to dress. When in doubt, lean on the side of formality.

Do I need to wear a suit or a blazer?

You can decide on whether a suit or blazer is appropriate depending on the position you are interviewing for and the industry you are in. A suit is more formal, and is an expectation in some industries, regardless of position. A less formal alternative could be pressed pants (such as khakis) or a knee length skirt, paired with a dark jacket or blazer. In some cases, wearing a simple polo shirt or blouse might still be appropriate, based on the role and industry expectation.

INTERVIEW PRESENTATION

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You can find great hair tutorials on YouTube if you are in need of inspiration.

Hair

Keep it neat and tidy. Long hair can be pinned up or bring a comb with you to touch it up before the interview. Facial hair should be neatly trimmed.

Cosmetics

A little makeup is good to keep a polished appearance. Keep it neutral with subtle colours for lips and eyes. Keep your nails well-trimmed and clean and avoid bright colours if painting your nails. Avoid heavy perfumes and colognes.

Shoes

Leather, lace-up, or slip on business shoes are recommended. Comfort is key and avoid extremes such as stilettos or platform shoes. Anything shorter than four inch heels are recommended.

Shirt/Blouse

Wear a tailored blouse, either long or short sleeve, in a colour coordinating with the rest of your outfit. Accompany it with a blazer or sweater. Long-sleeve button-up shirts should be buttoned up all the way.



Jewelry/ Accessories

Avoid flashy jewelry and heavy print ties or scarves that may be distracting. Keep it simple with a watch, earrings, and solid colour or textured tie/scarf (optional).

Pants/Skirts

Pants and skirts should be ironed and perfectly fitted (not too loose, not too tight). Knee-length skirts look trendy and professional. Make sure to pick a skirt that covers your thighs when seated.

Suits/Blazers

You can decide on whether a suit/ blazer is appropriate depending on the position you are interviewing for and the industry you are in, but when in doubt wear a suit. Full two-piece matching suits are usually expected for interviews. As a less formal alternative, you can choose to wear pressed pants such as khakis and a dark jacket/blazer.



When in doubt, go conservative. Choose the suit over the sweater or the pants over the skirt if you are having second thoughts about setting a good first impression.



You can inquire about the dress code when setting up the interview to help you prepare.



What Not to Wear: Jeans, tank tops, T-shirts, low cut shirts, open toed shoes or sneakers.

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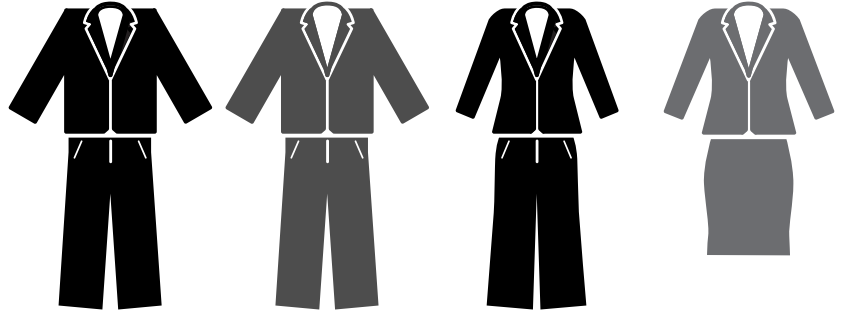
Look at other people in your industry to get an idea of what is considered acceptable. Every workplace is different, but keep things formal for the interview.

Business Formal:

Stay on the conservative side with navy, dark grey, brown and black two-piece matching suits in solids or very subtle patterns.

Choose a white or coloured shirt to match your suit, avoid flashy trends.

Shoes and jewelry should be kept simple and elegant.

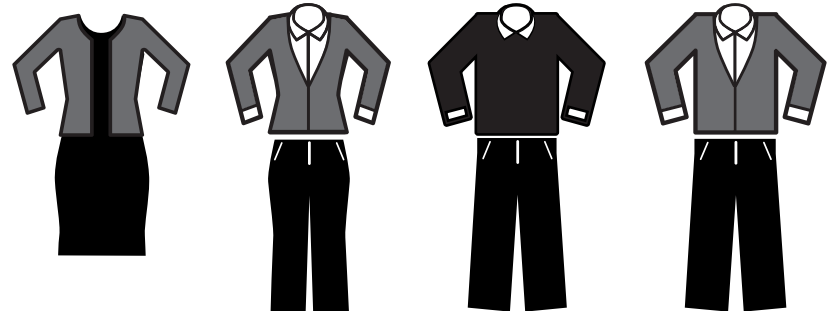


Business Casual:

Khaki and dark pants with simple shirts and sweaters are appropriate. Polo shirts are acceptable in very casual situations or hot weather.

Ties are not necessary but when in doubt always opt for more formal.

Shoes and jewelry should be kept simple and elegant, avoid anything that feels too flashy.



Hair, Accessories, Presentation:

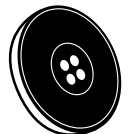
Hair should be neat and tidy. Long hair can be worn up or down. Facial hair should be well-groomed. Look to people in your industry for ideas.



Jewelry should be minimal and simple. A structured tote bag or briefcase can be helpful for holding extra resumes or your portfolio.



Make sure your hands are clean and fingernails trimmed. Avoid missing buttons or loose threads. Remember to remove tags and tacking stitches from new clothes.



Use very minimal perfumes and colognes or none at all. Remember some people have allergies and sensitivities.



It is a good idea to dress one or two levels higher than the dress code of the position you are applying to. Show that you care about the job and that you know how to interview.

References:

- <http://career-advice.monster.com/job-interview/interview-appearance/appropriate-interview-dress/article.aspx>
- <http://www.career.vt.edu/interviewing/interviewappearance.html>

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