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How to dress for interview success

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Struggling to decide on an outfit for your upcoming job interview? What you wear to an interview creates an image or perception of the type of person you are, so choosing your attire is critical to presenting yourself as the right candidate to hire.

How interview attire has shifted

The dot-com era ushered in a more casual approach to workplace attire, including during interviews, in the past 10-15 years. When the economic recession hit, job seekers began dressing up as a way to differentiate themselves from other candidates. The recession created a heightened awareness by hiring managers of what candidates wear to interviews. Interview attire is also often seen as a test of a candidate's familiarity of the company and industry.

Tips to dress for positive impact

- The appropriate interview attire depends on the industry in which you'll be interviewing, as well as the geographic location and time of year.
- Spend time on the Internet researching the company, industry and competitors to determine suitable interview outfits.
- Still not sure? Call the company's HR department and ask what they recommend you wear.
- When in doubt, err on the side of being slightly over dressed, rather than show up looking too casual.
- Don't have an appropriate outfit? Go to a large department store like Myers or David Jones and ask for help from a personal shopper or hire a personal stylist.
- Ensure that your clothes are cleaned and pressed.
- Avoid wearing too much perfume or cologne.
- Wear makeup and jewellery that are appropriate to the job/company/industry.

Your clothes can influence your chances for landing a job.

You only get one chance to make a first impression and your appearance is the first judgment an interviewer will make. It's important to dress professionally for a job interview, regardless of the work environment that you would be working in.

For men, we recommend a smart, fitted suit with an ironed, light coloured shirt, polished shoes and optional tie.

For the ladies, a suit or smart dress (not too short!) with a jacket. Make sure your hair is neatly styled and don't wear too much jewellery - no loud, distracting bangles here please!

It's important to wear something that gives you confidence and equally, is comfortable, especially when you're sitting down. Don't forget to take a mint to freshen up just before you go in.

As the old saying goes: "Perception is reality." Think about the image you want to project during your interview and then choose an outfit that will create a positive perception and is appropriate, given the time of year, your geographic location, and the job/company/industry.

- Lisa Quast, Forbes



Career Woman, Inc.