

Clothing Selection for an Interview

by Ruth Mayhew, Demand Media



Selecting the appropriate clothing for an interview is essential for making a good first impression.

Improve your chances of getting a second interview -- or a job offer -- by selecting the right interview attire. Though you may be nervous about the actual interview questions you'll face, confidence in your appearance may help you handle the interview jitters. Avoid waiting until the last minute to select your clothing for that important interview; plan ahead, just like you would prepare for answering the interviewer's questions.

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Subdued Colors

You needn't sacrifice your personal style when you're selecting the right suit or ensemble for an interview; however, don't take unnecessary risks, such as wearing a shocking pink skirt and sweater or a trendy retro suit in burnt orange. Choose among black, brown, gray or charcoal, and navy blue clothing to distinguish yourself as a job seeker that prospective employers will take seriously. Reserve that pop of color for a pocket square or a scarf, but even then, limit yourself to a small, colorful accessory.

Traditional Styles

Stick with timeless or conservative-styled clothing. Stovepipe slacks paired with a slim-fitting jacket and plaid shirt may be what's fashionable at the moment, but it's probably not suitable for an interview. For men, a traditional style suit -- not necessarily a stuffy, three-piece suit with matching vest -- is perfectly acceptable. For women, a skirt suit or pantsuit is also acceptable, provided the style is conventional and the skirt isn't too short, nor the pants too tight. The exception to that is if you're an aspiring fashion industry worker and expressing your knowledge of what's stylish would get you a leg up on the job.

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Repeat Wearings

Job seekers sometimes fret over buying a whole new wardrobe for the job search. Avoid unnecessary spending, especially if you cannot afford to and, instead, choose a few pieces that you can mix and match. Select a couple of interview suits or ensembles and, even if you have to repeat them, it won't matter if you're interviewing with different employers. Even if you meet with the same employer on two different occasions and you have one suit, you can switch the shirt and tie or blouse color for a completely new look.

Dress for the Occasion

Some employers won't mind if you're not wearing a suit to the interview, but others may frown on a job seeker's decision to, for example, dress down for a job that's in a casual work environment. The adage, "Dress for the job you want," may be appropriate in most cases. But if you're doubtful about what's appropriate for the work setting, call the human resources department to ask a staff member what's appropriate, recommends Forbes contributor Lisa Quast, in her January 2014 article "8 Tips to Dress for Interview Success." No one will think less of you for asking a reasonable question, but they might think less of you for being presumptuous in not asking.

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