

Dress to Impress for Job Interviews

By [Lisa Quast](#)

Securing the first [job interview](#) is an exciting moment. Along with researching the company, preparing for potential interview questions and reviewing your best skills and assets, it will be imperative to guarantee a great first impression. That means the right 'look' with proper attire. Following is a snapshot Q&A I've developed to guide individuals to 'dress for success' from the onset, establishing a first impression that is positive, impressive and improves your chance of securing a desired position.

What IS the appropriate attire for a job interview?

The appropriate attire depends on the industry in which you will be interviewing. Spend time on the Internet researching the industry, the company, and that company's competitors and look to try and find out what type of attire will be appropriate. If you still can't figure it out from your research, call the company and ask the receptionist for their opinion or get in touch with their Human Resources department and ask one of the HR representatives what the corporate dress code is for the company.

When in doubt, it is better to err on the conservative side by being slightly over dressed than it is to show up to an interview underdressed or too casual. If you show up being slightly overdressed and the interviewer makes a comment to that effect, you can always say something like, "My apologies, I decided to wear a suit because I wanted to show my respect to the position and the job interviewer."

If you don't think you have the appropriate attire for the job interview, go to a large department store such as Nordstrom and ask for help from a personal shopper. They will listen to your situation and then help determine appropriate clothing and accessories for your interview. I've used these types of services in the past and they are wonderfully helpful!

What style is appropriate for [creative jobs](#), [office jobs](#) and [manual labor jobs](#)?

Creative jobs: Creative jobs often require more fashion-forward, stylish attire be worn for job interviews. Spend time researching top clothing trends. You will need to look like you're creative and the style of your clothing, glasses, and accessories will help you project this image.

Office jobs: Office jobs usually require a more conservative clothing style. Do your best to find out prior to your job interview what employees wear to work on a regular basis. It might not mean you'll need to wear a suit to work every day...a nice pair of slacks or pants and blouse or collared shirt are often staples. This in mind, unless you're interviewing at a small start-up company, it's usually a good idea to wear a suit to the initial job interview.

Manual labor jobs: Manual labor positions rarely require wearing a suit to the job interview, and if you did, it might actually cause you to lose the opportunity because they'll either assume you're over-qualified or too good to get your hands dirty. Research the company to find out the most appropriate attire, but try to stay away from wearing jeans. A pair of khaki colored slacks or pants and a golf shirt, button-down shirt or cardigan is usually a safe way to go and look much better in a work environment than a pair of jeans.

Tips to [dress successfully](#) no matter what the position

- Do your research
- Check your wardrobe to see what you already have that would be appropriate to wear
- If you don't have the appropriate clothes, consider going to a large department store and asking for help from a personal shopper
- Ensure your clothes are freshly cleaned and pressed
- If female: Accessorize conservatively so they see the overall you, not just your jewelry; wear perfume sparingly or not all for interviews; and use make-up conservatively (e.g. no blue eye shadow or orange lipstick please!)
- Try on your entire outfit and look at yourself in a full-length mirror from all angles before the day of your interview
- If you're really worried about the clothes you've chosen, put them on and ask the opinion of a few friends you trust who will give you their honest opinion

Once you are dressed for success, it will project confidence and experience. Next step is to prepare for the discussion part of the interview!

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Lisa Quast's passion in life is making a difference in the lives of women by helping them achieve their dreams. Lisa is a career coach, author, business consultant, and the founder and president of Career Woman Inc., a Seattle-based international career development consulting company dedicated to helping women achieve career success. She's an accomplished speaker and coach, inspiring audiences with her charismatic approach, actionable recommendations, and proven methodology.