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Interview Attire **"Dress for Success"**



Guidelines for Women



“In an interview your attire plays a supporting role”

What your Clothes say about You!

In an interview your attire plays a supporting role.

Your conduct, your interpersonal skills and your ability to articulate intelligent and well thought out responses to questions are the most important elements.

Appropriate attire supports your image as a person who takes the interview process seriously and understands the nature of the industry in which you are trying to become employed.

Be aware that in some industries, customer contact and image presented to the customer is critical. In such industries, your attire will be judged more critically.

Your attire should be noticed as being appropriate and well-fitting, but it should not take center stage. If you are primarily remembered for your interview attire, this is probably because you made an error in judgment!

Dressing nicely and appropriately is a compliment to the person you meet, so if in doubt, err on the side of dressing better than you might need to.

Even if you are aware that employees of an organization dress casually on the job, dress up for the interview unless you are specifically told otherwise by the employer.

Never confuse an interview or business function with a social event. Don't dress for a party or a date.

Suit:

A two-piece matched suit is always the best and safest choice.

Conservative colors/fabric:

Navy and dark gray — are safe.

Other color trends may come and go, avoid the extremes.

Solids or very subtle weave patterns or plaids are safest.

Specifics for Women

Don't confuse club attire with business attire. If you would wear it to a club, you probably shouldn't wear it in a business environment.

Suit: Wear a two-piece matched conservative suit in a dark color with a coordinated blouse.

Skirt lengths: Much of what you see on television that masquerades for professional attire is actually inappropriate for a work environment. Your skirt should cover your thighs when you are seated. Showing a lot of thigh makes you look naïve at best, foolish at worst. A skirt that ends at the knee when you're standing looks chic and professional. Longer skirts are professional too; just make sure they are narrow enough not to be billowing, but not so narrow that you can't climb stairs comfortably. Ask yourself whether it will be distracting or reinforce your image as a person who looks appropriate for a business environment or gathering. High slits in skirts are not appropriate. A small back, center slit in a knee-length skirt is appropriate. On a calf length skirt, a slit to the knee to facilitate walking and stair climbing is appropriate.

Color/fabric: Navy, dark gray, brown, and black is safe. Other trends may come and go; avoid the extremes. Choose a solid or very subtle weave pattern or plaid (the kind that looks solid across a room). Wool or a wool blend is the best choice. Micro fibers are acceptable.

Blouses/sweaters: Underneath the suit jacket, wear a tailored blouse in a color or small print that coordinates nicely with your suit. A fine gauge, good quality knit shell is also appropriate underneath your suit jacket.

Jewelry/accessories: Wear a conservative watch. Jewelry and scarf styles come and go. Keep your choices simple and leaning toward conservative. Avoid extremes of style and color. Wear only one pair of earrings per ear. A button style that fits flat to your ear lobe in plain gold or silver is more businesslike. Avoid dangly styles that create distracting movement. Rings should always be 14-carat gold, sterling, or platinum. Limit yourself to one per hand, but a matched wedding set counts as a single ring. Skip the pinkie rings, also.

Specifics for Women

Cosmetics: Keep makeup conservative. A little is better than none for a polished look. Nails should be clean and well groomed, and can be buffed or polished. Avoid extremes of nail length and polish. Check your nail polish for chipping and wear. Polish can be clear, a lightly tinted pink or peach, or soft shades of rose, pink, or coral.

Fragrance: The safest advice is not to wear any fragrance for an interview.

Shoes: Should be leather or fabric/micro fiber. Choose closed-toe pumps. Opt for shoes in black, navy, gray, or taupe. Shoe color should match the hemline or be darker. Coordinate shoe color with your skirt suit. Regardless of what is in style, avoid extremes; no stilettos or chunky platforms. Make certain you can walk comfortably in your shoes; hobbling in uncomfortable shoes does not convey a professional appearance.

Hosiery: Should be plainly styled (no patterns), sheer (not opaque), and in neutral colors complementing your suit. A shade matching your skin tone is safest in very conservative industries. Avoid skin-tone colors with an orange or greenish cast. Avoid high contrast between your suit and hosiery color.

Purse/bag: Carrying both a large purse and an oversized briefcase creates an overloaded, disorganized look. Select one or the other. If you carry a purse, keep it small and simple. Purse color should coordinate with your shoes. Also, if you opt for a purse, carry business papers in a leather notepad or trim portfolio. You may choose to carry a small briefcase or business-like tote bag in place of a purse. Leather is the best choice for briefcases; micro fiber or fine woven are also acceptable.

Cost/quality: You are not expected to be able to afford the same clothing as a corporate CEO. Do invest in quality that will look appropriate during our first two or three years on the job. One good quality suit is sufficient for a job search if that is all your budget allows. You can vary your shirt/tie/accessories.

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Details:

Everything should be clean and well pressed.

Carefully inspect clothes for tags, tangling or dangling threads, and tacking stitches from new clothes, etc.

No missing buttons and not lint on clothing.

Grooming tips for everyone:

Hair: Should be clean and neat.

Shoes: Should be in polished condition. Make sure heels are not worn.

Details: No missing buttons, and no lint.

Hands: Clean fingernails.

Fit: Clothes should be clean, neatly pressed and fit properly.

Smell: Perfume or cologne should be used sparingly or not at all. No odors in clothes.

Don't smell like smoke.

Backpacks: Leave it at home for an on-site interview. For an on-campus interview, you can leave it in the waiting room or area.