Guidelines for Men

Interview Attire
"Dress for Success"

“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:
Choose navy, dark gray, brown or black. Other color trends may come and go, avoid the extremes. Solids or very subtle weave patterns or plaids (the kind that look solid across a room) are safest. Wool, wool blends, or good quality micro fiber for women only, are generally the best fabrics in all seasons. Avoid acetate/rayon blends.
Cost/quality:
You are not expected to be able to afford the same clothing as a corporate CEO. Do invest in quality clothing that will look appropriate during your 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/blouse tie/accessories.

Details:
Everything should be clean and well-pressed.
Carefully inspect clothes for tags, tangling threads, and tacking stitches from new clothes, etc.
No missing buttons and no 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.
Specifics for Men

Suit: A two-piece suit is always the best and safest choice. Don’t combine a suit jacket with pants that don’t match.

Conservative colors/fabric: Choose navy, dark gray, brown or black. Black for men is considered severe or overly formal, although it is common. 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 wool blends are the only acceptable fabrics for a conservative men’s suit.

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 your 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 and tie.

Ties: The styles come and go. Select good quality silk ties. Avoid fashion extremes, like character ties, in interviews. Notice what men wear at career fairs, at information sessions, and in industry.

Shirts: Long-sleeve shirts, even in summer. Choose white or light blue solid or conservative stripes.

Socks: Dark socks, mid-calf length so no skin is visible when you sit down.

Shoes: Leather, lace-up or slip-on business shoes, preferably black or cordovan. Invest in a good pair; even if you don’t wear them daily on the job, you’ll need them for other occasions and you should expect to get lots of years out of good shoes.

Belt: Black or cordovan leather, to match your shoes.

Facial hair: If worn, should be well-groomed.

Jewelry: Wear a conservative watch. Remove earrings.

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

Details: Everything should be clean and well pressed. Suits typically have tacking stitches to hold vents—on the jacket back and sleeves—in place before the garment is purchased. Cut them off if your retailer/tailor doesn’t. And that tag stitched on the outside of your sleeve is not meant to stay there like a Tommy Hilfiger label—cut it off! Carefully inspect clothes for dangling threads, etc.
Interview Attire
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Guidelines for Women

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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, dark gray and black — is safe.
Other color trends may come and go, avoid the extremes.
Solids or very subtle weave patterns or plaids (the kind that look solid across a room) are safest.
Wool, wool blends, or good quality micro fiber for women only, are generally the best fabrics in all seasons. Avoid acetate/rayon blends.
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 your 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/blouse tie/accessories.

Details:
Everything should be clean and well-pressed. Carefully inspect clothes for tags, tangling threads, and tacking stitches from new clothes, etc.
No missing buttons and no 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.
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: Choose navy, dark gray, brown or black. 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.

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.