



## DRESS FOR SUCCESS

It's true - ***You Are What You Wear!*** Especially when it comes to job interviews or any situation where you are meeting a potential employer.

Believe it or not, you are examined from head to toe in all interviews. Not only are your experience and personality sized up, but also your appearance. The better you are dressed, the more confident you will feel and the more confidence you will exude.

There's no impression like the first impression. Initial decisions made about you in the first three minutes of the job interview are nearly irreversible.

***The purpose of your clothing is to project an image of professionalism.***

Consider: Your clothes should subtly add to your appearance. More importantly, clothing should not detract from your business persona.

- ◆ Much as you might want to stand out, wearing the "business uniform" communicates instantly that you are a mature, stable professional and a member of the team.
- ◆ Even if the internal dress code is very casual, your interviewing attire should adhere to a conservative standard.
- ◆ Dress up - the best you would ever dress when actually employed there.

***Here's how to dress for the best possible outcome:***

- ◆ Research the prospective employer - companies and even industries have definable corporate cultures. Find out what the corporate "uniform" is - and wear it.
- ◆ Select an outfit you are comfortable wearing.
- ◆ Try on the outfit a few days before the interview - allow time to have dry cleaning and repairs completed.
- ◆ Everything must be neat, clean and ***ironed***.
- ◆ No bulging pockets or sagging coat lining.
- ◆ Hair and nails must be clean and groomed.
- ◆ The favorite color of most Americans is blue - it conveys trust, calm and confidence. Blue is a very good interview suit color.
- ◆ Shoes should be comfortable and polished. Shoes that are well cared-for signal "good attention to detail".
- ◆ Clean and polish your briefcase or purse; organize the inside. Carry a portfolio or professional-looking bag (not a backpack) to the interview. The items inside the portfolio or bag should include:
  - Pens and a pad of paper
  - Multiple copies of your resume
  - Multiple copies of your reference sheet
  - A comb or hairbrush
  - Your daily planner

## *“You don’t get a second chance to make a first impression”*

### **WOMEN**

1. Wear a solid color, two-piece conservative suit or jacket dress. Choose a conservative long-sleeved blouse, pressed perfectly with *no wrinkles*. Note: *all blouses should be tucked in!* Clothes should not be too tight.
2. Avoid open-toed, sling-back, high heels or stiletto shoes. Shoes should be clean and polished.
3. Be conservative with your jewelry. Avoid big earrings and things that jingle. Wear one set of earrings only. Avoid jewelry on your right hand and wrist (handshake).
4. Wear nude, tan or light gray/taupe hose. Avoid patterns and bright colors. Always have an extra pair available. *Never go without stockings.*
5. Hair should be neatly combed, pulled back, and not hanging in the face.
6. Keep make-up light and natural.
7. Minimal cologne, or none at all.
8. If you wear nail polish (not required), use clear or a conservative color.

### **MEN**

1. Wear a tailored suit, wool or wool blend (navy, gray or charcoal) with a white or very light-colored shirt, neatly pressed - *no wrinkles*. No dark colors. The point collar is the most popular style for interviewing.  
**A couple of things to look for in the correct fit of your suit:**
  - The sleeves should taper, gradually ending just over the wrist so the shirt cuff extends about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch beyond the jacket sleeve.
  - The length of the pants in the front should touch the front of the shoe and angle towards the back of the shoe to fall just above the heel.
  - Cuff or no cuff on the pants is a personal choice.
2. Keep ties conservative - preferably with a subtle pattern. The best ties are made of silk and have a coarse fabric lining to maintain the shape.
3. Wear dark socks that match the suit and extend up the calf so no flesh shows if legs are crossed.
4. Wear black leather shoes (wingtips or loafers) that are well polished. No boots.
5. Minimal jewelry - watch, wedding ring and school ring are acceptable.
6. Conservative haircut: collar-length, above the ears, neatly combed.
7. Be clean-shaven or if you have facial hair, it must be neatly trimmed.
8. No earrings - if you normally wear one (or more), take it (them) out.

#### **And, as always, remember to:**

- ◆ Have a firm handshake, but do not overdo it.
- ◆ Maintain eye contact.
- ◆ Always wear a smile!

Sources: Leslie Plotkin, [www.worktree.com](http://www.worktree.com)  
[www.dressforsuccess.com](http://www.dressforsuccess.com)  
[www.indiana.edu/~career/fulltime/interview\\_dress](http://www.indiana.edu/~career/fulltime/interview_dress)  
[www.dynastaff.com](http://www.dynastaff.com)