

Professional Dress

First impressions do count. Employers make assumptions about professional credibility and potential performance based upon your appearance. Neatness and grooming are important. Appearance at a job interview may work for you or against you. Few people are hired simply because they are well dressed, but wearing the wrong outfit has ruined the chances of many a job hunter. Select clothes that project the image appropriate to the position you want. Candidates should research the employer's standards and dress as though they were representing that specific employer.

MEN

- Solid-colored suits are best: medium to dark blue and gray or subtle pinstripes.
- Shirt and tie should be fairly conservative, no strong patterns or very bright colors!
- Dark polished dress shoes with dark socks are a must; no boots or athletic shoes.
- Hair should be clean and neat.
- Facial hair should be well-groomed.
- Hands and fingernails should be clean and neat.
- Avoid strong cologne.

WOMEN

- Neutral colors are best: blacks, beiges, blues, and grays.
- Always wear hose, even on a scorching summer day. Hose should be flesh tone with no pattern.
- Wear closed toe and closed low heel shoes; boots should be avoided completely.
- Nails must be clean and filed. Light-colored polish is acceptable; bright colors are distracting.
- Hair should be clean and neat. Shoulder length or shorter is most appropriate for business situations. Long hair should be controlled, or tied back.
- Make-up: Enhance your features, do not overpower them. Avoid excessive make-up.
- Perfume: Do not use perfumes that will overpower the interviewer, instead use light scents.
- Limit your accessories.

Neatness counts. Check for missing buttons, store or dry cleaning tags, tiny rips in your clothing, or run-down heels. Be sure your clothes are neatly pressed and use a lint brush if necessary. Your shoes should be clean and polished. People may equate how neatly you dress with how neatly you work. Make sure your nails are well manicured—regardless of gender!

Avoid showing anything that may be considered unprofessional such as tattoos, piercings, or exotic jewelry.

Remember, while you want to look professional and neat for your interview, dress for comfort and confidence as well. In the professional world, conservative clothing in basic colors is the unofficial uniform. In a more creative field, casual and colorful clothing may be acceptable. During the interview, you want to concentrate on selling your skills, abilities, and interest in doing the job, not on your clothes!

For more information on interviewing and to schedule a Mock Interview, visit the Career Services web site. From the Job Search section, click on Interviewing.