

Dress For Success: What To Wear For Your Job Interview

First impressions are everything. In job interviews, even more so. When you first meet a potential employer, they will form an opinion about you right away, largely based on how you present yourself. No matter what type of job you are interviewing for, it's vital that you maintain a professional appearance, because how you look can either make or break your efforts.

While you might be able to get away with a more eclectic look if you were applying to a tech startup, the world of finance is historically conservative. Keep that in mind when you're putting your look together. Think suit and tie for men, and for women, a smart business suit.

In either case, being well-groomed is essential. Shine your shoes, press your shirt, and think about giving your hair a trim before showing up for the interview.

Tips for Men's Interview Attire:

- Suits are always a good idea
- Navy, dark gray, or black
- Ensure your shirt and shoes are color-coordinated
- Wear a tie
- Pocket square optional, but a nice touch
- Minimal jewelry
- Neat haircut, clean hair
- Manicured nails
- Light cologne

Tips for Women's Interview Attire:

Women have greater options for what they can wear, which makes putting an outfit together a little more complicated.

- Navy, gray, black suit
- If wearing a dress, wear neutral-colored hose
- Conservative shoes
- Heels not too high
- Skirts either just above or just below the knee
- Minimal jewelry
- Nicely styled, neat hair
- Light makeup and perfume
- Neat, clean nails, with a low-profile polish

Things to Avoid in an Interview

Some of these items should go without saying, but it bears stating:

- Don't chew gum
- Do not bring your own coffee, water, or soda
- No visible tattoos and piercings (small earrings are okay)
- Put your phone on "do not disturb" and put it away

What to Wear for More Casual Job Interviews

If you know the job and the company is a little less formal, dressing more casually is okay. If you're unsure of what is expected, it's perfectly acceptable to ask the person who is scheduling your interview for some insight.

Though the workplace might be a little more relaxed, be sure you look well put-together. A disheveled presentation sends a message that you don't care much about appearances and may give the interviewer the impression that your work is sloppy too.

Even if there is no dress code, you should still stay away from jeans, t-shirts, and sneakers. Shirts and pants should be pressed, unstained, and free of rips and frays.

Always choose clothes that fit you well. For women, do not wear anything that the interviewer can see up, down, or through.

Keep accessories to a minimum. A watch is fine, and so are earrings, but avoid anything too flashy, or dangly.

Shoes should be closed-toed and closed-heeled – no sandals.

The night before your interview, be sure your getup is ready to go. Shine your shoes, put a tin of breath mints in your jacket pocket, and get ready to rock it.

Interviewing for a new job can be a stressful time, but wearing a professional and good looking outfit can boost your confidence and increase your chances of landing that dream job. No matter the outcome, the hiring professionals at Professional Alternatives are here to help.