



Dressing for Success

Resource

Version 1.0

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Dressing for Success Checklist

Dressing for an interview is just as important as preparing your answers to potential questions or, if required, creating your pitch. What you wear and how you present yourself gives your potential employer their first look at the person behind the resume. After all, as the [Cheeky Scientist](#) puts it, you only have 15 seconds to show an interviewer you are right for the job.

So how do you prepare to dress for success? The simple answer is do your research. Check your potential employer's social media sites and company website, paying particular attention to how employees are dressed. It'll give you a sense of the company culture and can give you clues as to what they're looking for in an employee. If you can, reach out to their HR department and ask what the dress code expectations are for an interview.

Still have doubts about choosing the appropriate attire? Dress in slightly more formal wear than you think the position requires. It's a handy rule of thumb and has the added benefit of giving you a little boost of confidence knowing you look your professional best. Employers appreciate the effort. According to [Forbes.com](#), 40% of interviewers are more inclined to give a formally dressed candidate the nod over one who is more informally dressed.

To help you dress for success, we've created a handy checklist so you can curate your interview outfit and ensure you're prepared to make the best first impression possible.

THE CLOTHES

Business Professional

Business professional is the most formal style of professional wear. Use this checklist to ensure you have everything you need:

Men

- ☐ Two-piece suit in neutral color (black, navy, gray)
- ☐ Solid color shirt in white, light blue, or pastel color
- ☐ Tie in a conservative pattern and color
 - Silk or silk-like works best
- ☐ Neutral-colored shoes, polished

Women

- ☐ Two-piece suit in neutral color (black, navy, gray)
 - If you opt for a skirt, it should be knee-length or longer
- ☐ Solid color shirt/blouse in white, light blue, or pastel color
- ☐ Closed-toe, neutral-colored shoes, with a low-to-medium heel

Business Casual

Business casual is slightly less formal than business professional. Here's what you'll need:

Men

- ☐ Sports coat/blazer is appropriate but not required
- ☐ Solid color shirt in white, light blue, or pastel color
- ☐ Tie optional
- ☐ Slacks, chinos, or khakis
- ☐ Casual shoes in good condition

Women

- ☐ Dress, skirt, or dress pants (no sundresses or leggings)
- ☐ Solid color shirt/blouse in white, light blue, or pastel color
- ☐ Casual shoes in good condition (no sandals or flip flops)

Smart Casual

As the name implies, smart casual is the most relaxed of the professional dress codes. Use this checklist to make sure you hit the mark:

Men

- ☐ Jeans, preferably in a dark wash (no holes or tears), or long pants
- ☐ Clean, plain, solid color shirt or T-shirt
- ☐ Casual shoes in good condition (no open-toed shoes or flip flops)

Women

- ☐ Jeans, preferably in a dark wash (no holes or tears), or long pants
- ☐ Clean, plain, solid color shirt or T-shirt
- ☐ Casual shoes in good condition (sandals may be appropriate, but no flip flops)

BEYOND THE CLOTHES

Personal Grooming

Men

- ☐ Neat hair, cut or styled recently (avoid brightly colored hair unless it is your natural shade)
- ☐ Neat, clean nails
- ☐ Little or no cologne
- ☐ Clear lens glasses

Women

- ☐ Neat hair, professionally styled (avoid brightly colored hair unless it is your natural shade)
- ☐ Neat, clean nails (if manicured, styled with a neutral polish option)
- ☐ Little or no perfume
- ☐ Subtle makeup
- ☐ Clear lens glasses

Accessories

- ☐ Professional bag (no backpacks)
- ☐ Minimal, classic jewelry that complements your attire
- ☐ Copies of any documents you've been asked to bring

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- ☐ Avoid smoking in or near your interview clothes
- ☐ Remove loose change, bulky items, etc. from pockets
(for items you must have with you, use your professional bag)
- ☐ Iron clothes
- ☐ Leave hats and ball caps at home
- ☐ Turn phone off before entering interview
- ☐ Wear comfortable clothes
- ☐ Practice good posture
- ☐ Use positive body language
- ☐ Do a dress rehearsal