

# Dressing for Success

Tips for making the right impression at Interview or when canvassing employers.



## BASICS

- It is important to project a professional image.
- Employers may assume that this is the best you will ever look.
- Unfortunately, making your way into the world-of-work means that you may be judged on the way you look and how you present yourself. This may not always be fair. There are a number of things you can do to feel confident about yourself in an interviewing situation. Because, as you know, you only get one chance to make a first impression.
- Dress for the job you want, not the job you have. You're trying to sell yourself.

## MUSTS

- ALWAYS wear a suit to an interview, even if the people who work at the organization are not wearing suits and the job for which you are interviewing doesn't require it. Remember, the people there already have the job...you don't!

## HYGIENE

- Always have fresh breath and clean body hygiene. This may seem obvious but take a shower, use deodorant, and brush your teeth.
- Wear perfume, cologne, or aftershave that is subtle, some people may be allergic. Your scent should leave the room when you do.
- Cover visible tattoos with makeup.
- Have clean, short nails without ragged edges. Women, have unpolished nails or use clear polish or a neutral tone.
- Take out any piercings (nose, eyebrows, tongue, etc). They can be put back in when you are not interviewing or at work.

## Women's Attire

### Do wear:

- A conservative suit (navy, gray, black). Pants suits are acceptable with many companies. Check out the office culture to find out for sure. When in doubt, wear a skirt suit.
- Clothing that fits your body correctly. Clothing is too tight when it is pulling horizontally across your body or has gaping buttons. Clothing is too big when tops are falling off the shoulders or pins are used to hold waist bands.
- Appropriate undergarments at all times.
- Accessories (necklaces, earrings, and bracelets) in keeping with the fashion trends of the season. Wear only one ring per hand.
- An ironed blouse.
- Clothing that is appropriate for the current season.
- Neat, pressed, clean clothing without tears, rips, hanging threads or pills. All buttons, snaps, or hooks should be on the garment and hems sewn in place.
- Polished shoes with matching belt (if appropriate).
- Sleeve length for suit would fall between your wrists and the top knuckle of your thumb

**Don't wear:**

- A dress, even with a jacket.
- Deep scoop necklines or deep V-necklines without a scarf.
- Casual clothing (denim, casual twill, knit t-shirts).
- Flashy, trendy, chunky shoes or accessories.
- Shoes that are not polished or are in need of repair.
- Large accessories around the head and neck, large hair bows, large drop/hoop earrings, or three or more earrings per ear.
- More than one ring on each hand.

**Hair and nails**

- Neat, clean, free of oil and dandruff.
- Keep colour-treated hair updated and without obvious root-growth.
- Wear only discreet hair accessories.
- Underarms and legs must always be shaved if visible.
- Fingernails should be well-groomed and an appropriate length. Generally, an acceptable nail length is to have nails no longer than  $\frac{1}{2}$  the length of your nail bed.
- Chipped nail polish is unacceptable.
- Decorated nails and nail jewellery are unacceptable.

**Makeup**

- Makeup should be neat and refined. Colour application should be subtle and blended (less is more), avoid too bright or frosted colours.
- Makeup colours should compliment skin tone.
- Avoid line of demarcation at the jaw line, blend foundation into neck.
- Eyeliner should be smudged slightly, avoid colour other than brown or black.
- Mascara should be brown or black, avoid colours.
- Eye shadow should be soft and blended, avoid bright colours or glitter.

**Men's Attire****Do wear:**

- A conservative suit (navy, black, gray).
- Sleeve length for suit should fall between your wrists and the top knuckle of your thumb.
- A matching tie that extends below the belt line.
- An ironed long-sleeve cotton shirt.
- A white undershirt beneath your dress shirt.
- Clothing that is appropriate for the current season.
- Neat, pressed, clean clothing without tears, rips, hanging threads, or pills. All buttons, snaps, or hooks should be on the garment and hems sewn in place.
- Polished shoes with matching belt.

**Don't wear:**

- Casual clothing (denim, casual twill, knit t-shirts).
- Flashy, trendy, cartoony tie.
- Casual suede or unpolished shoes.
- Earrings of any kind (ear, nose, or otherwise).
- Sports (tube) socks, your socks should match your pants.
- Distracting jewellery.

## **Hair**

- Neat, clean, free of oil and dandruff.
- Combed, styled.
- Length should be no longer than below the collar in the back or below the eyebrows in the front.
- Beards and moustaches are really the only acceptable facial hair. These must be neat, trimmed, and complimentary to face. **NO FOOD IN BEARD!**
- NOTE: Some professionals would argue that a beard is not acceptable. If you are not attached to it, go ahead and shave it off. You can always grow it back

## **Wardrobe Building Tips**

- Quality clothing and accessories do cost more, but they also last longer.
- Simple clothes multiply into countless outfits because subtle changes go a long way.
- Individual pieces can be worn often.
- Blazers and pants that are fully lined are of better quality and more durable.
- Suggested suit fabrics: natural fibres such as wool.

## **Starting out for women**

1. Suit: Described earlier, this can be a pantsuit or skirt.
2. Jacket: A solid neutral in a simple style. Wool is a good choice for cool weather, and linen, cotton, or silk in warm weather. Quality tailoring. Matching or no buttons. This could be your most expensive piece, so have it altered if it doesn't fit perfectly.
3. Skirt #1 and Pant #1: A solid neutral that is the same colour or blends with the jacket (#2). Use same guidelines for material as for jacket. Again, tailoring is important.
4. Pant #2: Casual pant in any casual material from wool to denim. Accent colours okay, but first purchase should be one of your neutrals.
5. Skirt #2: A neutral colour in tweed, herringbone, or check that blends with jacket (#2). Good quality and tailoring.
6. Blouse #1: White, soft white or ivory depending on your colouring.
7. Blouse #2: Solid or print in an accent colour.
8. Blouse #3: Solid neutral in a dressy style. Fabric should be dressy, too.
9. Dress: Solid colour, simple style such as a chemise. This can be dressed up or down with accessories. Good quality and tailoring.

## **Starting out for men**

1. Dark Suit
2. Blue blazer
3. 3-4 other blazers or one other suit (lighter colour)
4. Pants to go with suits and blazers
5. White shirts
6. Light blue shirt (be careful with stripes)
7. Wingtip black shoes with a black belt
8. Brown shoes with a brown belt