



REFERENCE GUIDE FOR MEN'S INTERVIEW DRESS ETIQUETTE

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Introduction

**They say your smile is the first thing the interviewer sees.
Your clothes are probably a close second.**

From the moment you meet your interviewer, your appearance and body language are sending cues about the kind of worker you will be. Are you professional? Do you have good communications skills? Will you fit in well with the culture of the workplace?

The interviewer has limited time to make these difficult evaluations and must rely on the information available. If your clothes are wrinkled or you are dressed too casually, it may seem that you do not take the position seriously.

Though these impressions may be far from accurate, you will be fighting an uphill battle to prove otherwise. First impressions influence the way the interviewer perceives all subsequent information about a person.

This guidebook will help you make the best impression possible



Rule 1: Research Ahead

Choosing the right interview attire is not alchemy.
It's a matter of knowing the corporate culture and the position's demands.

Check out the website

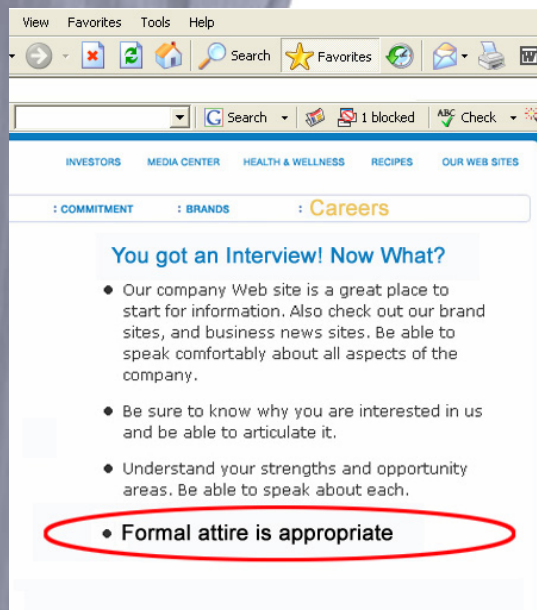
Many corporate websites will show images of employees in their work routines. Use this as a clue. Also, review the career section for comments on interview etiquette.

Go to the source

Visit ahead of time to observe the workers in context. If dress is casual, be sure that it's not a dress down day such as Casual Friday. If you have any doubt call HR to ask what is expected. Many companies expect professional attire for interviews even though the office dress code is quite casual.

Consider the type of position you are applying for

Creative positions such as advertising and design may allow for a more liberal look. Positions involving high-level consultations, or meetings with important clients may require a classical professional look. If you are unsure of what standards to apply, ask a business dress expert:





Rule 2: Err Towards Formality

It is harder to overcome being underdressed than being overdressed

Dress like a professional and you will feel like a professional

If you feel overdressed

- Don't Panic: You're sending a strong message about taking the position seriously,
- Politely tell the interviewer that the casual dress code gives the office a warm and familiar atmosphere that you would like to be a part of
- If you can, discretely remove your jacket and drape it over your chair

If You feel underdressed

- Maintain a professional demeanor, to compensate for informal attire
- Maintain an erect posture
- Speak formally (avoiding colloquialisms and words such as "like" and ("you know").
- Mention that you were misinformed about the dress code and you look forward to dressing more professionally

Business Formal vs. Business Casual

Business Formal

“Business attire” is a full suit with matching pants, a dress shirt and tie. It differs from the type of outfit you might wear to a wedding or evening event. It is conservative, designed to be sharp but not flashy, and elegant but not overly formal. The idea is to showcase the individual, not the clothes.



Business Casual

“Smart casual” is a more relaxed, yet professional look. Pressed pants, a collared shirt, and clean, matching accessories. A sport coat will add a touch of class to a casual look. Avoid jeans, sneakers and T-shirts. You should never dress completely casual to an interview.



The Look: Jackets and Pants Business Attire VS Smart Casual

Mid to Dark colored suit

- Solid Navy or Grey are best, you can consider a subtle stripe.
- More prominent stripes are appropriate only for higher level executive positions
- Black suits are more formal and austere.
- If you do wear black, soften the look with a blue shirt.

Pants: Must match jacket

- Pleated pants have a more classical look
- Flat front pants have a slimming, modern look, but may look awkward on larger men.
- Suit pants and jacket MUST be tailored from identical fabric.



Khakis or slacks

- Always with a crisp crease
- Cotton, wool or micro-fiber
- Darker colors are dressier
- Lighter colors are more casual
- Avoid jeans or cargo pants

Sport coat or blazer:

- Makes a casual look a bit more formal
- Can be removed for a more casual look
- Choose a jacket in a solid shade or a subtle design (no bold, bright patterns or colors)



Business Casual

Dress shirt:

- Shades of light to mid blue are most effective. If you choose another color, pastels are safest.
- Subtle patterns are fine
- White shirts create a more formal look

Silk Tie: Keep it subtle

- Should coordinate with suit and shirt
- Patterns in your shirt, tie and suit will fight each other unless they are different designs and size



Casual Shirts:

Long-sleeved are more business oriented

- Button-down is a neater look
- Cotton or cotton-blend
- Solid pastels or small subtle patterns subdued patterns
- Crisp, clean and pressed
- Avoid T-Shirts and black

Sweaters:

Sweater alone or under a sport coat is a great look

- Never a sweatshirt

Tie:

- Adds a touch of elegance



The Look: Shoes, Socks, Belts Business Attire VS Smart Casual

Shoes

- Clean, polished and black
- Burgundy or brown are fashionable, but a little risky for an interview
- Stick to black unless your matching skills are excellent.

Belt:

- Should match shoe color
- Avoid overly large or flashy belts

Socks:

- Coordinate with suit
- Same shade or a shade darker
- Solid or with a subtle design
- Never wear athletic socks.

Shoes

- Clean, polished leather
- Avoid sneakers and boots

Belt:

- Coordinate with shoes
- Avoid overly large or flashy belts

Socks:

- No bright pastel colors
- Use muted tones
- Don't be remembered for your socks!



The Look: Accessories

Complete the professional look

- Bring a conservative briefcase or leather binder

Should put everything you need at easy access:

Reference letters, resume copies, notepad

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Accessories should complement your professional look, but not distract the interviewer.



Choosing The Right Suit

The suit is the anchor of a professional man's wardrobe.



A great interview suit is crisp and tasteful, never flashy and does not make its own statement but showcases the individual wearing it. A suit is memorable to the interviewer when it is inappropriate; wrinkled, dirty, overly flashy, poorly fitted and coordinated, etc. A professional look will help you give a great first impression that your skills and personality can build on.



Choosing The Right Suit: Fabric

Wool

A quality wool is the most appropriate fabric for your interview. Wool is resilient, crease resistant, drapes well and is relatively long wearing. Wool breathes, is comfortable in a wider range of temperatures and has an elegance that cannot be duplicated.

Other Fabrics

Fabrics such as silks, linen, rayon have their place in a less formal environment where one wishes to make a fashion statement.

Polyester on its own or blended with wool can be presentable but may feel like you are wearing a plastic bag. It is also likely to pill.

A quality microfiber, a fine fiber woven from polyester or a polyester blend, can be woven to breathe reasonably well but does not have the elegance of wool.



Choosing The Right Suit: Style



Single Breasted Suit



Double Breasted Suit

Color / Pattern

- For entry or mid-level positions, dark grey and navy suits are best.
- Black is more formal and austere.
- Solid colored suits are best. Subtle stripes are fine. Avoid flashy patterns.
- Strong stripes convey authority and are appropriate for higher level positions.

Single vs. Double Breasted

Choose a 2 or 3 button single breasted suit. Double breasted suits will look sloppy worn open, and are not considered main stream in the corporate climate.

Buttons

- 3-button suits will look best on a taller, slimmer man.
- 2-Button suits will have a slimming effect on a shorter, stockier man.

Choosing The Right Suit: Fitting

Jacket:

Jacket Length

- Should just cover crotch and seat of pants. Can hang 1-2" longer

Collar

- Should fit snugly against back of neck. Allow $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ " of shirt collar to show
- Back of jacket should lie flat against back below the collar

Body of Jacket

- Should not be overly tight. Allow for some play when jacket is buttoned
- A slight break on the back beside the armhole is fine, allowing for movement

Sleeve Length

- Sleeve should come to the base of the palm when arms are at your sides
- Shirt cuffs should show $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ "

Note: It is very common for arms to be different lengths. Sleeves should be tailored to fit each arm.



Single Breasted 2-Button



Single Breasted 3-Button

Choosing The Right Suit: Fitting

Suit Pants:

- Pant should sit comfortably on the waist, just above the hips.
- Pleats should not open. If pants are flat front, watch that pockets do not gape. These are both indications that the pant is tight on the seat.
- Pant length should reach the heel in back or up to ½" shorter.
- Allow for a small break in the front.
- Pleated pants can be worn with or without cuffs.
- Flat front pants should be finished with plain bottoms.



Final Notes

Attention to detail is critical:

- 1) Clean and polished dress shoes.
- 2) Suit, shirt and tie clean and pressed.
- 3) Well-groomed hairstyle.
- 4) Cleaned and trimmed fingernails.
- 5) Avoid cologne or perfume (some people are allergic).
- 6) Avoid flashy jewelry and watches. Keep it simple.
- 7) Well-brushed teeth and fresh breath.
- 8) Check your attire in the rest room just before your interview.
- 9) Finally, make sure your tie is straight, your hair is combed and you are ready for the moment.

