

Prep Sheet: Dress the Part for Interviews

Keep in mind:

1. First Impressions count significantly. You don't get a second chance to make a first impression.
2. An interviewer will check you out from head to toe to make sure that you fit the image of their company. Dress conservatively and professionally. Avoid trendy clothing, big patterns, accessories, and bright colors.
3. Dress the part and research ahead of time what to wear for an interview. Don't wait to the last minute to try and find a suit. Get it weeks beforehand, so it is tailored and ready to go.

Women:

1. Stay away from sheer clothing, low-cut shirts, and anything that shows your belly. Short skirts do not work. Provocative is not professional.
2. Get rid of visible body piercings and cover up tattoos. It might seem unfair, but the fact is you could be overlooked for a job because of a tongue stud or tattoo.
3. Forget casual wear and worn, torn shoes. Use some shoe polish to shine up your look, or if you can afford to buy new shoes, do.
4. Think conservative. Think black, navy or dark brown business suit. It's better to be overdressed than underdressed. If you're not sure what appropriate dress is at the company, call the human resource department and ask.
5. Blouse should be white or a solid **light** conservative color (i.e. blue, grey)
6. Make sure your clothing fits. Uncomfortable clothing is distracting. Your focus should be on what you are saying, not on what you are wearing.
7. When you are shopping for interview suits, consider buying a more expensive outfit if it has classic lines and good fabric. It will wear better than a trendier, less expensive suit. You can always add new tops and accessories to freshen your look.
8. Stick with solid, dark colors dress suits: gray, navy, or black.
9. Keep jewelry and makeup to a minimum.
10. Think about your field. If you are going into banking, play it safe with conservative suits. Those in other fields, like fashion or art, can stray a little farther from the most conservative clothing. Those companies may even want you to show your fashion sense. Do some research so you know what clothing is typical of your industry?
11. Keep your skirt length at the knee. Check yourself by sitting down in front of a mirror.
12. Make sure your shoes are closed toe with a conservative heel. Wear pantyhose.
13. Go easy on the perfume. You don't want to offend anyone.
14. Wash and fix your hair in a professional manner. Check your makeup, hair and clothing just before you enter an interview.

MEN:**Suit (Jacket and Pants)**

1. Wear a navy, navy pinstripe, charcoal gray, or charcoal gray pinstripe, or black suit for a first job interview.
2. Wear a jacket with 2 or 3 buttons. Stay away from jackets with more than 3 buttons since they are considered to be trendier.
3. Button the top button on a 2 button jacket and button the top either the middle button or the top 2 buttons on a 3 button jacket. Never button the bottom button on a jacket.
4. Wear plain front or pleated slacks. Make sure to get them tailored properly, wearing dress shoes with an average height heel, not sneakers.
5. Wear your pants at your natural waist which is right below your belly button. Do not wear them down low, or they will look sloppy. Pants should be able to stay up on your waist without belt.
6. Pant length matters. You don't want pants to be too long or that will look unfinished and untailored.
7. Pants can have a cuff or a plain bottom. Typically a cuff bottom is worn since it looks more finished.

Shoes, Belt and Socks

1. Match your shoes to your belt (leather to leather). For example, with a charcoal gray suit you should wear black shoes and a black belt. With a navy suit, you can wear black shoes/belt, or you can wear burgundy shoes/belt.
2. Wear lace up shoes on interviews.
3. Match your sock color to your pants color. For example, charcoal gray socks would be worn with a charcoal gray suit.

Dress Shirt

1. Wear long sleeve dress shirts, not short sleeves.
2. Show a quarter inch of your dress shirt at the bottom of your jacket sleeve.
3. Wear 1 of 3 collar choices—either a button down collar, a point collar, or a spread collar shirt.
4. Wear a white or light blue shirt. These are the only two colors that are recommended for a first interview.
5. Wear a barrel cuff shirt which is a shirt with one button at the bottom of the sleeve. Do not wear cuff links to an interview.

Tie

1. Wear a conservative tie with a small pattern that complements your suit. Avoid big patterns and bright colors.
2. Striped ties are always appropriate with the best color choices being burgundy, red or gold. Avoid ties that are fashion forward in color like pink, fuchsia and dark olive. It's OK to pick up the color of the suit in the tie, but it does not have to match exactly.
3. It's fine to wear a striped tie with a pinstripe suit as long as they don't clash.
4. The bottom of your tie should hit right at your belt.
5. Tie a medium size knot. Avoid big knots.

Men and Women: Overall Appearance

- A well groomed, conservative and professional appearance is important.
- Hair should be washed, combed and combed.
- Men: Beards or mustaches should be trimmed.
- Avoid wearing jewelry. If you wear a watch, it should be conservative. You can wear one ring, but avoid bracelets.
- Do not wear sunglasses on your head into an interview.
- Your suit should be pressed, not wrinkled.
- Your shoes should be polished.
- Avoid colognes and perfumes since they can offend people.
- Get rid of gum, candy or cigarettes.
- Trim and clean your fingernails.
- Check your appearance BEFORE you enter an interview.