

What Not to Wear on an Interview

By Alison Doyle, About.com Guide

When you are dressing for a job interview, image really is everything (or most of it). The image you present to a potential employer is the first thing they are going to notice about you - before you even have a chance to say a word or shake a hand. In order to make a good first impression, you need to dress professionally and separate your social image (if it's more casual, and it probably is) from your professional presence.

How to Dress for an Interview

Why it's always important to dress professionally for a job interview and what to wear.

What Not to Wear on a Job Interview

- Flip-flops or sneakers.
- Underwear (bras, bra straps, briefs, boxers, etc.) that is visible. Don't wear any underwear that shows - even if your bra straps match your top.
- Shorts.
- Jeans.
- Skirts that are too short.
- Pants that are too low-rise or too tight.
- Blouses that are too low-cut or too short - don't show your cleavage or your belly.
- More on underwear and low-rise pants - make sure the top of your thong, if you wear one, doesn't show above your pants.

Trendy vs. Classic

- **A classic interview suit** that will last for years is a better investment than the latest trendy attire that will only last a season.
- **Your idea of trendy** might not match the interviewer's perspective on what's fashionable, so err on the side of dressing conservatively when you interview.
- **Shop Wisely** - Visit outlets, shop sales, shop online, and use coupons to get the most mileage out of your interview budget.
- **Plan Ahead** - If you have that one classic interview suit in your closet, you'll be prepared for an unexpected interview, regardless of when it occurs.

Your Professional Presence

- **Your Social vs. Your Professional Presence** - What you wear off-the-job and socially doesn't have to be what you wear interviewing or at work. In fact, your professional presence may be very different from personal presence, and that's fine. They don't have to mesh - you can have a closet full of fun clothes and a wardrobe of work clothes.
- **Perfume and Cologne** - Your scent (even if you smell good) can be an issue. I once worked for some who wouldn't hire anyone he could smell from across the room. Also, scent is one of the strongest senses and your favorite perfume or cologne might be the same scent the interviewer's ex-girlfriend or ex-husband wore. That subliminal negative impact could squash your chances of getting a job offer. With any type of scent, less, or none, is better.
- **Pantyhose** - The question of whether women should wear pantyhose on a job interview created a lot of discussion on this site and the answer was overwhelmingly yes.
- **Tattoos and Piercings** - Depending on where you are interviewing, you may want to consider covering your tattoos and taking out your rings. There are companies that have policies which limit both.
- **Starting Your New Job** - If you're not sure what to wear on the job, ask the hiring manager before you start. You can also visit the workplace to see what the people coming in and out of the building are wearing. There is no better way to make a bad impression than to show up for your first day because you're underdressed or overdressed.