

WHAT TYPE OF JEWELRY CAN YOU WEAR TO AN INTERVIEW?



You know the drill. **To get the job**, you need to look like you can fit in. But to get anywhere at the job, you have to stand out. Whether it's a quick word in the elevator with your immediate supervisor or a full-dress oral presentation to the big brass, you've got to show enough flair to outpace the competition, while still demonstrating that you're part of the team. There's no failsafe set of instructions for pulling off this balancing act, but we can give you a shortcut. You can call it "workplace jewelry" or "office accessories"; we call it "biz bling."

We are not—repeat, not—talking about the bling-bling of hip-hop stars and dead rappers. Unless you work in the music or fashion industry (where you should first check out what the boss is wearing), biz bling should never include teacup-sized gold earrings, rings and necklaces that spell out your name in giant gold script, or diamond-studded grills for your teeth. It's not about putting everything you can afford out there for public eyeballing. It's about restraint.

For men, the most important single piece of bling is a watch. It's the second thing anyone looks at, right after checking to see whether there's a wedding ring. The right watch will say that this is a guy who is steady and reliable and cares about how he comes across. If a graduation or other big occasion is coming up, ask for a good watch with a stainless steel band; if not, scrimp on other things and put your own resources into a classy timepiece. On the lower end, Kenneth Cole or Swiss Army work. A good mid-range choice is a Tourneau, and at the high end a Rolex, Gevril, or Panerai will do the trick.

Watches also matter for women. Lower-end possibilities are Anne Klein, Kate Spade, and Coach, and more expensive options include Tiffany and Cartier. But other jewelry is just as important. We recommend a plain gold chain or a tasteful piece from, say, David Yurman.

Probably the most telling accessory a woman can wear is a necklace. The most conservative choice, of course, is pearls—but they aren't universally admired. For some, though, the old-style connotation of pearls makes them the right choice for the workplace. Wearing pearls makes you look classy and serious. They set you apart in a good way. They don't have to be expensive, but they do have to be white or ivory (no giant fuchsia-tinted baubles, please), and the beads should have knots between them rather than simply being strung in a line.

No-nos at work: facial or other observable body jewelry, bracelets on men, flashy money clips (go for a modest number or a nice leather wallet instead), eye-grabbing belt buckles, and women's jewelry that clangs or jangles. Oh, and ankle bracelets: A friend of mine was interviewing someone for a **management job** who wore a very nice black conservative suit, hose, open-toed shoes—and a big gold ankle bracelet with a tattoo on her leg. She claims she didn't hear a word the woman said during the interview.

Multiple earrings on women are also out; so are any earrings on men—unless your (male) boss has one. A guy with an earring looks like he thinks he's still in college. It's okay to leave the hole in a pierced ear empty—it shows you know what's appropriate for the office.

The whole point of biz bling is to enhance your image without making too much of a statement. The general rule is that you don't want to be competing with your accessories for attention.