

JOB INTERVIEW ATTIRE — FOR MEN

Men assume that because proper interview attire isn't the minefield for them it is for women, they don't have to worry too much about what they wear to a



job interview.

Wrong. You may think your resume or cover letter gives a prospective employer their first real impression of you. Nope -- that just gets you in the door, and by the time of the actual interview, an employer may have forgotten everything in your resume, or not even have read it yet. It's the first moment that an interviewer sees you that gives them their most important impression of you. Is this prejudice? Only if they're judging you based on race or ethnicity. You choose your hairstyle, choose your hygiene, control your own gait and posture, and you select your own clothes. These are all messages you select and control. If you're not aware of them, controlling them, then who know what you are telling the world about yourself? As the great David Byrne once sang, "I am just an advertisement for a version of myself." Let's talk clothes. **Have at least two suits -- a formal suit and a casual one.** I guess what I mean by "casual suit" isn't really a suit -- it's a coordinated shirt, slacks and sports coat combo, usually a medium-to-dark earth tone. This is what you wear when, and only when, the employer instructs you not to wear a suit to the interview. The rest of the time, wear a nice two-piece suit, purchased within the last five years, excellent condition (no wear or stains), dark blue or charcoal. Black is acceptable, but makes you look like you're going to a funeral -- wear a colored tie to cheer it up. **Wear a nice shirt.** White is best, properly fitted, with stays in the collars. If you know how to coordinate a colored shirt, go ahead -- but white is safer. No French cuffs unless you're French. Cuff links are nice -- silver, not gold -- but not necessary. No stains -- eat *before* you change for the interview. Also, make sure your suit and shirt are all newly dry-cleaned and pressed. Or at least iron them yourself. **Wear a tie.** The tie should be silk, either a solid color or a subtle pattern. Absolutely do not wear any kind of novelty tie to a job interview. You can wear a college tie -- if you know in advance that your interviewer went to that college. Otherwise, keep it simple and conservative. Clip-on ties are for blue collar workers circa 1953. Are you a blue collar worker, circa 1953? If you don't know how to tie a tie, [look here](#). **Wear nice shoes.** Yes, people look at your shoes. Wear leather business shoes, lace-up or slip-on, preferably black or brown. Spend some money, if for no other reason than pricier shoes will be more comfortable than cheap ones, and you never know how far you will have to walk from the car, or how long you might need to stand. Don't think you can get away with black sneakers -- this screams "I'm a recent college grad and I live in my Mom's basement." **Match your socks.** Buy nice socks, and make sure they color coordinate with your suit and shoes. This is one of the little trivial things employers notice. If you're wearing white sports socks with your black suit and loafers, you will not make a good impression. **Wear a belt.** Like shoes, belts quickly wear out and become damaged. Have a recently purchased belt that fits properly -- no extra long belt poking out of your suit. A slender belt is better than a thicker one. And absolutely no novelty buckles. Unless you live in Texas. **Groom your facial hair.** If you are clean shaven, then make sure you really are clean shaven -- take extra time to shave before an interview. Get under the chin. Even up those sideburns. Trim your nose hair. If you have facial hair, you're already at a disadvantage -- some employers still think it's 1947, and frown on beards and mustaches. Some firms even have policies against facial hair -- you do not want to work there, unless you enjoy mandatory calisthenics, "WWJD" mugs and daily veneration of Walt Disney. So if you have facial hair, trim it closely and evenly. Long beards are for pirates and hermits. Shave the edges to keep the beard neat. Also, it's 2009 -- mustaches with no beard are appropriate only for cops and gay men. Tom Selleck can get away with it -- you can't. **Wear a watch.** You will need to know the time. Actually, you can get away with almost anything for a watch -- unusual watches make good conversation pieces. If a firm is unusually conservative, stick to a conservative watch.