

TIPS TO DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Perfect grooming is your first assignment when you interview for a job, whether you want to be a CEO or an entry-level factory worker. To a prospective employer, how you dress says a great deal about you.

DON'T LET YOUR IMAGE SABOTAGE YOUR CAREER

Web Source: <http://www.job-interview.net/howtodress.htm>

What are you "saying" before you speak a word?

Is looking harried and unprofessional draining away your personal power and positive impact? While it's easy to succumb to the hazards of the corporate rat race, beware. Appearing stressed, ruffled, or haggard downgrades your professional image. Portraying a harried image - regardless of how hard you work or how smart you are - places you at risk of damaging your professional reputation, of hitting a wall in your career, of impeding your success potential, of not getting the job you want.

To get ahead (and to stay ahead) in any career, pay attention to your workplace image as it is a powerful communicator. The nonverbal messages your image sends can work in your behalf, or they can work against you. Your clothing is a primary component of your image and it's a potent communicator with its own coded language. Your apparel can signal that you are a leader with winning potential, or it can scream that you're a loser. If your clothing is waving the loser flag, you have to work extra hard to command respect and inspire trust.

The trick is to start each day looking impeccable with a highly professional put-together image, a look that includes businesslike attire that is well coordinated and in mint condition. Immaculate grooming, from your head to your feet, is also a necessity.

People do notice the details of your image. More importantly, people make assumptions about you based upon your late or mid-afternoon image just as much as they do at 8:00 a.m. Statistics show that executives are especially observant of their cohorts' business image. According to a recent survey conducted by MRI (Management Recruiters International), more than one third (34.2%) of executives polled think that business casual dress has gone too casual, eroding respect.

Another study conducted by two economists, the Hammermesh-Biddle project, revealed that attractive people have higher incomes. This was true even for construction work, telemarketing, and other jobs that did not require public contact. To highlight this point, the *Wall Street Journal* article announcing the project's findings was named, "Good Looks Can Mean a Pretty Penny on the Job."

Anyone can be perceived as attractive. Yes, anyone. If you pay attention to the finer details of your image, you can be perceived as attractive and professional, whether you are dressed up or down.

In today's digital world, the visual aspect has never been more critical. Harry Beckwith, author of *Selling The Invisible*, says that people do not simply form impressions of others, they become anchored to them. Beckwith claims that busy people - almost all people today - are apt to make snap judgments of others, and then base all their later decisions on them.

Can you afford to make a stressed and rumpled impression? No, not if you consider that your success or getting the job you want is often tied to others' perceptions of you. A prominent CEO recently said, *"If people only knew that it can take two years to undo one negative impression, surely they would try harder."*

Your image is the "Home Page" of your personal web site and a web page of your company's site. Do others click on you as having the answers? Do they see you as having the ability to get the job done, or do they surf on?

Communication statistics reveal that in only five to thirty seconds, three things are determined about you, whether accurate or false:

- 1) Your Socioeconomic Status
- 2) Your Educational Level
- 3) Your Desirability

In the end, we all tend to associate well-dressed individuals with intelligence and achievement. And most people like to be associated with winners. Thus, well-dressed and well-groomed folks are always granted more opportunities to prove themselves - granted more opportunities for success.

Business is a game, somewhere between war and sport. Both war and sport require strategies to win. Just as the best sports equipment can give an athlete the competitive edge, a crisp businesslike image can work to help you get the job you want as well as gain you promotions and raises.

There are many things in life that we have no control over. One thing you can take charge of is your image; you actually have a monopoly on it. Avoid the pitfalls of a harried image with these tips:

De-stress Your Image: Power Up to Get Ahead

1. **Attract, don't distract.** Look businesslike, yet stylish, not boring like a corporate filing cabinet. Wear a fashionable suit or dressy tailored separates that appear as a well-coordinated outfit. A tailored jacket, one that fits you well, is the essential power garment to any separates outfit, even a casual one.
2. **Warrior-ize your wardrobe.** Win the time war, organize your closet so that your business clothing is separated from your social apparel. At all times,

- have at least three complete outfits (business casual or traditional business) pressed and ready to wear - outfits that empower you, making you feel like a million.
3. **Wear Winning Armor.** Long sleeves are essential to a take-me-serious look. We've already discussed the power of a tailored jacket. It's your armor. But if dealing with a more casual situation, wear long sleeves. Bare arms target you for sharks or cause you to be discounted. Sleeveless garments worn in the workplace mark a woman as a socialite, not a serious businesswoman. Short-sleeve shirts worn for business relegate a man to the second string.
 4. **Get a Leg Up.** Wearing socks or hosiery is non-negotiable. Naked feet (and/or bare legs) do not command respect in a business environment. Save that look for your social time.
 5. **Put Your Best Foot Forward.** Shoes tell your secrets; they are the strongest indicators of your socioeconomic status. For business wear, shoe styles must be closed-toe and closed-heel and they must be in mint condition. Nicked heels, scruffy toes, or unpolished footwear scream failure.
 6. **Look Successful.** A successful image attracts greater success. And success leaves clues in your physical image. Buy the best quality garments and accessories that you can afford. Have goals to get ahead and work them by dressing for the job you want, not the one you have.
 7. **Have perfect timing.** Wear a metal watch; it adds enduring strength and power to any business image - male and female.
 8. **Exude Confidence.** Stand tall, with your shoulders back. To be perceived as confident, women must wear tastefully applied makeup. In our society, well-applied makeup conveys high self-esteem and confidence. It says that you pay attention to details. Women who consistently wear tastefully applied makeup earn 20 to 30% higher incomes. For both men and women, be sure to finish your face with a smile.
 9. **Get A-head.** A stylish haircut is essential to a professional image. A great hair cut saves you time; it's far easier to style. Hair is a readable barometer. Avoid becoming freeze dried in the past with an out-dated style.
 10. **Breathe powerfully.** Accumulated stress shows in your body via your breathing. The more stressed you are, the more you tend to breathe shallowly. Take several time outs each day to do power breathing exercises. Let your mind go, and breathe in and out - from your lower abdomen - for three full minutes at a time. Then watch your energy be revitalized. Your skin and eyes will look refreshed. And your posture will return to a power position.

It pays. Take control. Go that extra image mile. De-stress and power up your nonverbal communication today. Maintain your image consistently and watch your ability to command respect and your income potential soar.

For more tips on how to power up your image and project success, visit the [Communication & Image Resource Center](#).

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How to Dress for an Interview:

Web Source: <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewattire/a/interviewdress.htm>

Men's Interview Attire

- Suit (solid color - navy or dark grey)
- Long sleeve shirt (white or coordinated with the suit)
- Belt
- Tie
- Dark socks, conservative leather shoes
- Little or no jewelry
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- Limit the aftershave
- Neatly trimmed nails
- Portfolio or briefcase

Women's Interview Attire

- Suit (navy, black or dark grey)
- The suit skirt should be long enough so you can sit down comfortably
- Coordinated blouse
- Conservative shoes
- Limited jewelry (no dangling earrings or arms full of bracelets)
- No jewelry is better than cheap jewelry
- Professional hairstyle
- Neutral pantyhose
- Light make-up and perfume
- Neatly manicured clean nails
- Portfolio or briefcase

What Not to Bring to the Interview

- Gum
- Cell phone
- Ipod
- Coffee or soda
- If you have lots of piercings, leave some of your rings at home (earrings only, is a good rule)
- Cover tattoos

Interview Attire Tips

- Before you even think about going on an interview, make sure you have appropriate interview attire and everything fits correctly.
- Get your clothes ready the night before, so you don't have to spend time getting them ready on the day of the interview.
- If your clothes are dry clean only, take them to the cleaners after an interview, so they are ready for next time.
- Polish your shoes.
- Bring a breath mint and use it before you enter the building.

Additional Interviewing Resources

How to Dress for Success

How to dress for an interview including advice on what, and what not, to wear on a job interview, appropriate interview attire, how to impress a prospective employer, business vs. business casual attire, and tips on dressing for success.

Interview Etiquette

Interviewing can be even more stressful when you are expected to eat and talk at the same time. Here's how to survive a lunch or dinner interview.

Interview Questions and Answers

The key to successful interviewing is to review these typical interview questions and prepare your answers. Also be ready with questions for the interviewer - here's a list.

Winning Interview Skills

So, you've landed an interview for a seemingly wonderful job! Now what?