How to Dress for an Interview

PRESENTED BY:
NADA ABDELHACK, MA, GCDF
Welcome and thank you for attending. So, to begin, Before I tell you about my self, I want to remind you to please sign-in if you have not done so already.

(*) My name is Nada Abdelhack. I coordinate the internship & Job placement programs for the School of Engineering,

(*) As a certified career advisor, I help students with revising their resumes and cover letters,

(*) but that is not all, I also provide tips on interviewing, including how to dress for interviews, how to make the most out of career fairs, and essentially, I am part of the Engineering Student Success Center or ESS team and we are here to help students succeed at UNM. I’m available to address anything career related, including jobs and internships.

(*) ESS is the Engineering Student Success Center. We are here to serve engineering and computing student needs, so make us your go to place, or your starting point if you will, when you need help finding resources and to talk about issues you might be having.
How to Dress For a Job Interview

The 3 Ps

Interview Attire
- Men’s
- Women’s
- Gender Neutral

Dressing for a Casual Interview
- College Job
- Internship
- Summer Job
- Virtual Interviews

What Different Colors Say

Accessories

What to Avoid

Questions

A job interview is your opportunity to make a great first impression to your potential employer. Dressing for success is a big part of the interview process. Ask yourself “am I prepared to make that terrific first impression?” Well, it’s smart to always plan ahead especially when it comes to your wardrobe. It’s always a good idea to have a few interview outfits ready. That way, you’re not scrambling at the last minute to find something to wear.

When you receive an email or a message telling you that you’ve been invited to an in-person interview. The first question is What do I wear? We are here to help you so keep in mind the tips we are sharing with you here. First thing to keep in mind here is that the interviewer wants to get to know you during the interview. So as not to distract your interviewer’s attention from learning about the skills you offer to the outfit you’re wearing, stick with the theme of looking polished and professional no matter what job you’re interviewing for. There are many different types of jobs, though, and the dress for each is not always the same, so, in this presentation, we will go over the following: READ

(*) The 3 Ps

(*) Interview attire, I’ll go over idea for Men’s interview wardrobe, women’s interview wardrobe, and gender-Neutral interview wardrobe.
(*) Dressing for casual interview, I will go over how to dress for an interview for a college or campus job, how to dress for an interview for an internship, and also for a summer job, and how to dress for a virtual interview.

(*) I will also talk about interesting facts about what different colors say about you.
(*) I’ll touch on Accessories
(*) Some things to avoid
(*) And then we’ll close out by opening it up to Questions
As you start to get serious about applying for jobs and finding your career, you need to think about your image. Ask yourself “when I present myself to a potential employer, what do I want them to see?” Remember, 1st impressions are extremely important and can mean the difference between landing your dream job or being passed up because you didn’t meet the “visual expectations” they’re looking for to some one who matches their company style. Or, worse yet, you don’t look like you’re serious about competing for this job. When shopping and getting your interviewing wardrobe ready, the key is to find clothing that achieve the 3 Ps. The 3 P’s will apply regardless of what you choose to wear to your interview. Here is what the 3 Ps stand for:

(*) Clothes shouldn’t be too big, too small, too tight, or baggy. So, in other words, they should fit you right. If you can, you may want to take them to a tailor to get them fitted to you.

(*) To look polished, your clothes should be clean and wrinkle-free. I suggest that you invest in dry cleaning your clothes once in a while, but if you can’t afford dry-cleaning, keep them pressed and ready.

(*) To look professional, stick to neutral colors, such as black, taupe, beige, brown, blue, and gray - these are always safe colors and make good options because they’re easy colors to match. More about colors later.
Some TIPS before we move on:
A note to remember, Professional clothes can be pricey. That is why UNM Career Services partners with JC Penny partner every fall (September) for the Suit up Event. UNM Students and employees are invited to shop for career outfit and pay a lot less than retail. Also, I’m sure you’ve heard of TJ Maxx and Marshals, as well as Savers and other thrift stores where you can find good clothes and really good bargains.

Also, a good tip/hack for the clothes you have on hand and plan on wearing to an interview, is to spray diluted fabric softener onto clothes to reduce wrinkles to make ironing easier. And use spray starch to give clothes a crisper look.
Men’s Attire

Let’s start with Men’s Attire. For an interview, the dress code is usually business professional (this means a formal suit with a matching tie), business casual (which is dress slacks, a matching shirt, and a blazer is optional, no tie required for this form of dress), or casual (this is a more relaxed look, meaning slacks and a shirt, or a matching polo shirt) depending on the company you’re interviewing with. We’ll talk more about casual dress later. Here is a list of the clothes options you should have on hand and ready at all times when you are in the interviewing stage of starting your career.

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Yea, your clothes need to be, I’ll say it again, clean or dry cleaned and
pressed. You can customize the outfit you’re going to wear according to the type of interview you’re going to. So, for example, you may not need a suit, especially here in our laid-back NM culture, so a button-down shirt with dark slacks and a blazer for a casual interview will do the trick (although a blazer may not be necessary either, if you’re not sure take it with you just in case, you can always take it off or leave it in the car).

Remember, an outfit is not complete without a matching belt and shoes which should complement your outfit. Definitely stay away from fancy belt buckles and studded belts. A simple black, brown, navy-blue or burgundy leather belt should match whatever slacks you wear. And opt for dark brown or black shoes, you can match them with pretty much anything you wear.
Examples of Men’s Attire

These are examples of what is acceptable to wear during a formal interview and during a business casual interview. And then you also see an example of what not to wear. So, think about if you’re the hiring manager, what would be your 1st impression on seeing the candidate come to you dressed like the example on the left? Keep in mind that your 1st impression is going to influence your interviewer’s initial opinion of you, which could also influence how your interview can go. Remember that looking professional can be a deciding factor if two equally capable candidates who interviewed equally well, are competing for the same job.

The general rule is that the bottom button of a suite jacket is NEVER buttoned. Also the length of the tie, the tip has to be at the top of the belt, and notice, for button up shirts, only button the final button when using a tie.
So, additional points to keep in mind here for men are:

(*) Facial hair
Men who fall under the “hairy” category will want to make sure they trim their facial hair to keep it neat. This includes your beard or moustache as well as ear and nostril hair. If in doubt, just go clean-shaven.

(*) Hair styling
Go for styling products that keep your hair in shape with a natural look, rather than hair gels or creams that create a greasy look.

(*) Outfit choice
Make sure your suit or shirt and pants are freshly laundered, neatly pressed and well-coordinated to help you look professional and smart. No interview outfit is complete without a belt and dress shoes.

(*) Scents
Use deodorant to stay fresh and dry. Avoid colognes and strong fragrances. You don’t want to overpower your interviewer in any way. A point to remember
is that some people are even very sensitive to synthetic scents and can have respiratory reactions, so that is another reason to keep the scent to a minimum. This applies if you are a smoker, if you are, make sure you are not taking that scent in to the interview with you

(*)Breath
If you just had a meal before your interview, make sure people can’t smell it you. Or If you’re a smoker, don’t smoke for at least half an hour before the interview, and if you have to have a coffee beforehand, make sure you have breath mints on you. You don’t want to put off the interviewer with stinky breath.

https://www.jobstreet.com.my/career-resources/5-essential-job-interview-grooming-tips-men-women/ (POST IN CHAT)
Let’s talk about women’s professional wardrobe. Women have a bit more options.

READ

(*) A navy-blue blazer
(*) Button-down Shirts
(*) Blouses
(*) A black dress
(*) Sweaters
(*) A pair of classic black slacks
(*) A cardigan
(*) Closed toes shoes.

A navy-blue blazer is extremely versatile. Not only can you wear a blazer on numerous occasions, but it also works well with many different outfits, even dark-wash jeans for a casual interview.

Try being creative with color and textures. When you’re shopping for a button-down, remember that the neckline should be modest. Make sure your bra is covered and avoid showing cleavage. It’s also a good idea to keep your button-down tucked in unless it’s a style that is designed to be worn not tucked in.
A blouse can be combined with either a skirt or slacks. Add a skinny waist belt for a touch of detail that makes the top pop. Depending on where you're being interviewed, you can add a jacket to dress up the look. A khaki skirt is also a good addition to your working wardrobe because you can dress it up or down.

A tasteful "little black dress" is a simple yet refined business wardrobe. Invest in a quality dress that skims the knee. Finish your outfit with a pair of black heels for a classic, timeless formal business look.

Sweaters are a great way to add color and contrast to an outfit.

Dress slacks is an essential part of a woman's interview wardrobe. It's worth investing in a pair of quality black dress pants that fit well and will hold up after many wears. Once you have a good pair of dress pants, it's easy to dress them up or down.

A cardigan can be worn with dress slacks and can be paired with a blouse. This can add interest and color and keep you warm when the weather turns cool.

You should opt for closed toe shoes rather than sandals or open toe shoes for a more finished look.
For women, the same guidelines apply as men. Let’s take a look at this example of how a woman can look professional and how she can look unprofessional. Again, if you were the interviewer, which candidate would give you a positive initial impression? Right, the gal on the left. Afterall this is the person who will be a representative of your company. She looks professional and well put together, and ready to do her work. The gal on the right looks like she ready to go to the mall or out to lunch.
Hair: Styled neatly

Makeup: Less is More

Outfit: Keep it professional

Scents: Light and subtle

Breath: Keep it fresh

The takeaways for women are:

(*)Hair
If you have long hair, tie it up in a ponytail or at least make sure it’s neatly styled.

(*)Makeup
Less is more, when your goal is to look professional. Go for fresh, natural colors and keep it simple and light. If you are unsure about how to apply make-up, a tip is to visit a cosmetic counter and get some application tips.

(*)Outfit
Whether you’re opting for a pantsuit, a skirt suit or a chic dress, remember to keep it businesslike. Stay away from plunging necklines, micro-mini skirts and anything too revealing which might send out the wrong message. Don’t forget about appropriate footwear—wear shoes that look good but don’t leave you in pain with each step.

(*)Scents
Just like the men, use deodorant to stay fresh and dry, but avoid strong
perfumes that might be overpowering.

(*)Breath
Again, the same rules apply here—You don’t want your interviewer to smell the onions you had on your burger when you start speaking. Also, if you are a smoker, don’t smoke for at least half an hour before the interview. Carry breath mints in your handbag in case you need to freshen your breath.

https://www.jobstreet.com.my/career-resources/5-essential-job-interview-grooming-tips-men-women/ (POST IN CHAT)
For those of us who don’t identify with traditional gender specific roles, and if how you typically dress doesn’t conform to a traditional gender norm, your interview attire shouldn't have to, either.

The key, as with gender-specific attire, is to find clothing that is polished, professional, and a fit for the company you're interviewing with.

Here is a link you can visit to get more information: Images taken form:  https://www.google.com/search?q=images+transgender+interview+attire&rlz=(POST IN CHAT)
Because here in NM we tend to be more casual, let’s focus a bit more on dressing for a casual interview. Dressing for a more casual interview means you can have a more laid back and relaxed look. This doesn’t mean you shouldn’t look professional though. So, for those casual interviews:
(*) No, don’t get out those jeans. Business casual and casual interviews doesn’t mean you can wear your jeans and sneakers or flip flops, and no, not clothes that would be more appropriate for the gym either. You should choose slacks and a button-down shirt or a crisp polo shirt for the guys, and for the gals, a skirt and matching top, or also dress slacks and a button-down shirt or a matching top.
(*) Jeans may be OK for an interview at a startup for example, but make sure they’re clean and don’t have holes or ragged seams. You’re going for stylish, not sloppy – and it’s still a good idea to dress up a bit more than the folks who are already working there.
(*) Not sure what to wear? When there’s no real dress code, keep it professional and dress in business casual outfits, Like I pointed out previously, this means slacks and a shirt for the guys (don’t forget your belt and nice shoes. And for the gals, you can also wear slacks and a blouse, a skirt and a nice top, etc. Complete your look with nice shoes and accessories. It’s always better to be overdressed than underdressed.
Just because you are interviewing for a job on campus, doesn’t mean that you can get away with wearing sweats, or shorts and flip-flops to a job interview. When interviewing for a college job, while you don’t have to dress in formal business attire, you should dress professionally. You’ll show that you know how to behave in a professional manner if you’re hired.

You’re also sending a message that you are serious about your work and in turn your interviewer will also take you seriously, even if it’s an entry-level position. Also keep in mind that even if it’s a position just steps from the dormitory— it still requires a certain level of professionalism. Sure, in most cases you don’t need to go out and buy a new outfit, it is still important to look nice and make a good impression on your interviewer.

On-campus jobs tend to be more relaxed, so you will have the freedom to express your personality and be more relaxed with what you wear. But, it’s important to remember that you need to always look polished and professional.
Pretty much the same rules apply for interviewing for an internship position as they do for interviewing for a job. You need to look professional! You can take your cues on how to dress from your target company’s industry and location. Let’s say you’re interviewing at a financial firm on Wall Street, then you should definitely dress formally. On the other hand, here in NM, companies tend to have more casual dress codes, so you can dress down a bit.

So, how do you research a company’s dress code? And this applies to if you are looking for a job or an internship, or even if you are looking to volunteer for an organization. Your best bet is to get it directly from the source. Ask the recruiter when they send the notification (usually through email) if it’s not mentioned there. You can also reach out to the company’s HR department. However, if you’re feeling shy, you can always check the company’s website, too. They may have a published dress code, or pictures posted of employees that can give you a clue. And don’t forget your network—it may be that a current or former employee can give you some insider advice.
Typically, summer jobs are more casual and don’t require that you dress formally. You can skip the suit. However, you still want to look polished and professional. But, it’s always a good idea to confirm this with your supervisor.
How to Dress for Virtual Interviews

Dress to Impress
Dress Head to Toe
Research Company’s Dress Code
Wear Colors That Suit You
Be Mindful of Accessories
Select a Neutral Background

So, yes we’ve all seen the commercials where the guy is wearing a nice shirt and tie and his pajama bottoms while working virtually. Well, don’t do this during an interview! The same general rules we applied to in person interviews also apply to virtual interviews.

(*) You not only want to dress to impress, but also

(*) dress head to toe. When it comes to dressing for your virtual interview, get fully dressed, including shoes. You might think why wear dress shoes they won’t be seen? Well, that’s kind of the point. Looking the part isn’t just for your potential future employer’s sake; it also helps you feel the part. So, in a virtual interview, you should dress the same as you would in a face-to-face interview. Doing so not only makes you appear professional and excited about the opportunity, but it will also make you feel more prepared and confident.

(*) You also want to do what you can to research company’s dress code

(*) Just as with your in-person interviews, you want to wear colors that suite you, and we’ll touch on colors next.

(*) Again, be mindful of accessories, especially because over a screen they may appear different than in person.

(*) And lastly, choose a quiet area and set up in front of a neutral background. Use a well-lit area, natural light is most flattering.
What Different Colors Say

One important, and often overlooked, aspect of an interviewee's first impression is the color of their interview attire.

An Interesting fact is that Color psychology has been used in marketing and branding for years, but research in the last decade has taken color psychology and applied it to human personality traits. Colors aren't merely associated with various feelings but can actually shape our perceptions and personalities.

This article will give you details what your favorite colors say about you. https://bigthink.com/mind-brain/color-personality-psychology?rebelltitem=1#rebelltitem1 (POST IN CHAT)

So, whether or not you are aware of it, different colors bring out certain human responses. Let’s go through the list of different colors you might want to wear for an interview, and the emotions they can evoke. Picking the right colors is important if you want to bring out certain aspects about your personality. Let’s take a look at what messages different colors can send.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neutral Colors</th>
<th>Blue</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Gray</th>
<th>Brown</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calm, Trust, and Confidence</td>
<td>Truth and Simplicity</td>
<td>Sophistication and Neutrality</td>
<td>Calm</td>
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(*)Blue, particularly navy, (*) is a great neutral color for interview outfits. Blues convey feelings of calm, trust, and confidence—great qualities for an interviewer to sense in you. Blue is also many people's favorite color, and wearing an interviewer's favorite color will always make a great first impression.

(*)White (*) is crisp and clean, white is a great color for shirts and blouses. The color conveys truth and simplicity and adds a bit of brightness without being too overwhelming.

(*) Gray is another great neutral color for interview outfits. (*). It evokes sophistication and neutrality. Gray is a great color to wear as a suit or dress; it allows you to look powerful but is not quite as domineering as a black suit or dress.

(*) and last but not least, brown is a neutral color (*) that evokes feelings of calm. It is a great solid, neutral color for an interview.
Black
Power, Authority, and Drama

Red
Energy and Passion

Black is a very popular color for suits and dresses in interviews. However, black is a very commanding color that conveys a lot of power, authority, and even drama. This is a good color for a job in a conservative environment like a law office, or for an interviewee applying for a high-level executive position. However, keep in mind that black can be a bit overwhelming in a more laid-back office environment and can make you appear unapproachable.

**Tip:** Using black as an accent color (for example, in a scarf or tie) can give you a sense of authority without being overwhelming.

Red is a bright, powerful color that conveys energy and passion. (politicians often wear red ties for this reason)

**Tip:** A pop of red (for example, in a scarf or tie) can convey just the right amount of passion without making you appear too emotional.

Here is another tip for you: Limit the number of brightly colored items you wear to
one, and make sure it is not the dominant color of your outfit.
Remember, when choosing your accessories, the focus should be on you, not on what you’re wearing—unless of course you’re interviewing for a job in the fashion industry, then it doesn’t hurt to show a little bit of your unique style.

Men should limit their accessories to a wedding band (if you’re married) and a nice watch. You could wear a class ring or a fraternity ring if you think that will help your cause, if you’ve networked and know you’re meeting with an alumnus of your institution or frat for example. But overall, less is more in this situation.

Women have a little more leeway, but you still want to keep your jewelry on the conservative side. Even if you’re interviewing for a position in a more creative field, wearing one or two carefully chosen pieces is recommended. Once you get the job, you’ll be able to express your own style.
What to Avoid

Cell Phone Interruptions
Bright Flashy Colors
Dated Attire
Revealing Clothes
Hoodies

https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-not-to-wear-on-an-interview-for-teens-4061802

Finally, let’s sum up what to absolutely avoid.

(*) Turn your cell phone off! There is nothing more annoying than your phone ringing, vibrating or lighting up during an important interview. This can be distracting to both you and to your interviewer and cause you to lose your focus. Not Good!

(*) Be mindful of colors when choosing clothes. If an outfit is a bright (like red), it will come off as too flashy for an interview setting. If you plan to wear a daring color, make sure the overall design of your outfit acts as a counterbalance. So, for example, you match a bright red blouse with a black or navy jacket. Or a bright shirt can be toned down with a Navy-blue jacket.

(*) In a competitive job market, everything matters — including your overall appearance. If your wardrobe is outdated, or if you have been out of the workforce for a while and your closet reflects it, invest in some modern clothes to wear to your interview. To get an idea about the latest fashion, you can visit department stores
and try on some outfits to get ideas. You can also consult online resources such as this one, I’ll put it in the chat: https://www.thebalancecareers.com/best-interview-attire-for-every-type-of-interview-2061364 (POST IN CHAT)

(*) A short hemline and plunging neckline, or clothes that are tight fitting and restricting aren’t acceptable for a job interview. Besides looking professional, you want to be comfortable during your interview.

(*) Keep the hoodies at home. Avoid wearing any hooded tops such as sweatshirts, sweat jackets, and tops with hoods attached.

Lastly, I want to remind you to keep in mind that you can find bargains in stores like Savers, TJ Maxx, Marshals, Walmart, and others. So, you are not limited to pricey department stores when shopping for your career wardrobe. And lastly, take advantage of the Suit-Up event that UNM Career Services partners with JC penny for. It’s usually scheduled in September.

For more information you can visit: https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-not-to-wear-to-a-job-interview-2061181 (POST IN CHAT)

https://www.thebalancecareers.com/interview-outfits-for-women-2061091
## Conclusion

Help with:
- resumes
- cover letters
- career advisement

Please reach out to me,
Nada Abdelhack at
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I would like to conclude with saying I focused this presentation on dressing for an interview, but as I said at the start, I do so much more than that! If you have specific questions about resumes, cover letters, interviews, or anything associated with all of that, I am available M-F 8-5. I am also available to help you with your other career development needs so please reach out. My email address is nabdelha@unm.edu.

When things become normal again and we can hold in-person meetings, please visit me at my office located in ESS.
And with that, I welcome feedback, so please provide it here, and I’ll past the link in the chat.
(*) Also, don’t forget to follow us on social media, (*) and check out all of our other services and upcoming events through our website or our succESS app.

(*) Thank you for your attention and for inviting me here this evening and I’ll take your questions.

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