

Dress for Success and Creating Positive First Impression



“You cannot climb the ladder of success dressed in the costume of failure.”

Zig Zigler

Author, salesman, and
motivational speaker

How many times have you heard that you only have once chance to make a first impression? This phrase may be overused, but it still stands strong, especially for job seekers.

Did you know that a person will size you up during the first 15 seconds of the encounter? They will create an opinion about you based on the way you dress, walk, talk, present and conduct yourself. Don't make mistake, dressing and grooming appropriately may not get you the job, but it will help to stand out and make a positive first impression.

Do you know how a person evaluates you?

55% body language and appearance

38% verbal tone

7% verbal content

AP Austin Peay State University Career Services

As you may have noticed, appearance, body language and verbal tone play a huge role in the first impression. So while you want to be the best version of YOU in the interview, here are some guidelines to help you make a good first impression and set the right tone to the interview.

Tips to projecting positive body language:

Facial Expression: relax, smile

Hands: Firm handshake, eye contact and smile are important to projecting confidence

During an interview, keep your hands relaxed above or on the table

Eyes: Steady, observant eye contact

Head: Still, straight

Posture: Straight, relaxed. Can mirror the body posture of the interviewer

Arms: Avoid crossing arms



Ladies' Clothing

Different jobs require different styles of dress. While some companies have a more relaxed dress style, others may prefer more professional dress style. However, there is a golden rule of thumb that is universally accepted: dress your best for interviewing but conservatively.

Business Professional Wear:

- Tailored or Pencil Skirt with a matching jacket or blouse
- Suit pants or slacks
- Tailored dress with a jacket

Business Casual Wear:

- A Skirt should extend to knees
- Slacks with a matching blouse
- Suit jacket or Cardigan
- Khaki pants or Nice trousers



Do's and Don'ts for Interview Dress:

- Do wear a dress or skirt whenever possible
- Don't wear jeans, tank tops, spaghetti straps dresses or other casual clothing
- Don't wear if it feels too tight, too long, too short, or too much
- Don't show too much skin, this includes cleavage, shoulders, and arms
- Do wear pleasant colors, avoid shiny, glittery, gold, silver or leather fabrics

Colors:

<i>The Color Message</i>	
What do your interview clothes say about you?	
<i>Gray</i>	<i>Sends a message of calmness and neutrality</i>
<i>Brown</i>	<i>Conveys a solid and grounded approach to life</i>
<i>Blue</i>	<i>Conveys trustworthiness and reliability</i>
<i>Black</i>	<i>Conveys power and authority</i>
<i>Red</i>	<i>Sends a message of energy and enthusiasm</i>
<i>White</i>	<i>Conveys truth and integrity</i>



Accessories:

Shoes:

- Your shoes will be noticed by an interviewer
- Closed-toe shoes for ladies are recommended. Never wear sandals, no matter how dressy they are!
- The color of your shoes should complement your outfit.
- Beige, black, brown, navy, navy or gray are appropriate colors
- Avoid wearing bright colors such as red, yellow, or gold

Jewelry:

- Tastefully chosen jewelry can add to your outfit and highlights your personality
- Avoid too much jewelry or excessively large jewelry pieces
- Avoid wearing nose rings, eyebrow rings, lip rings, and other piercing
- Remember- conservative is the key!

Hair:

- Your hair should complement your face and complexion
- Wear a conservative yet attractive style for an interview
- Style hair so that it is away and out of your face
- Hair color should not be more than one or two shades darker or lighter than your natural hair color
- Bright unnatural hair colors (green, blue, burgundy, pink, etc.) must be avoided

Men's Clothing:

General rule: it is better to dress a notch higher than underdress.



Business Professional Attire

- Clean Pressed Suit
- Suit jacket with coordinated slacks
- Button up shirt (white, blue, beige, or other light color) with complementing traditional tie
- Dress shoes (black or brown only)
- Dark socks

Business Casual

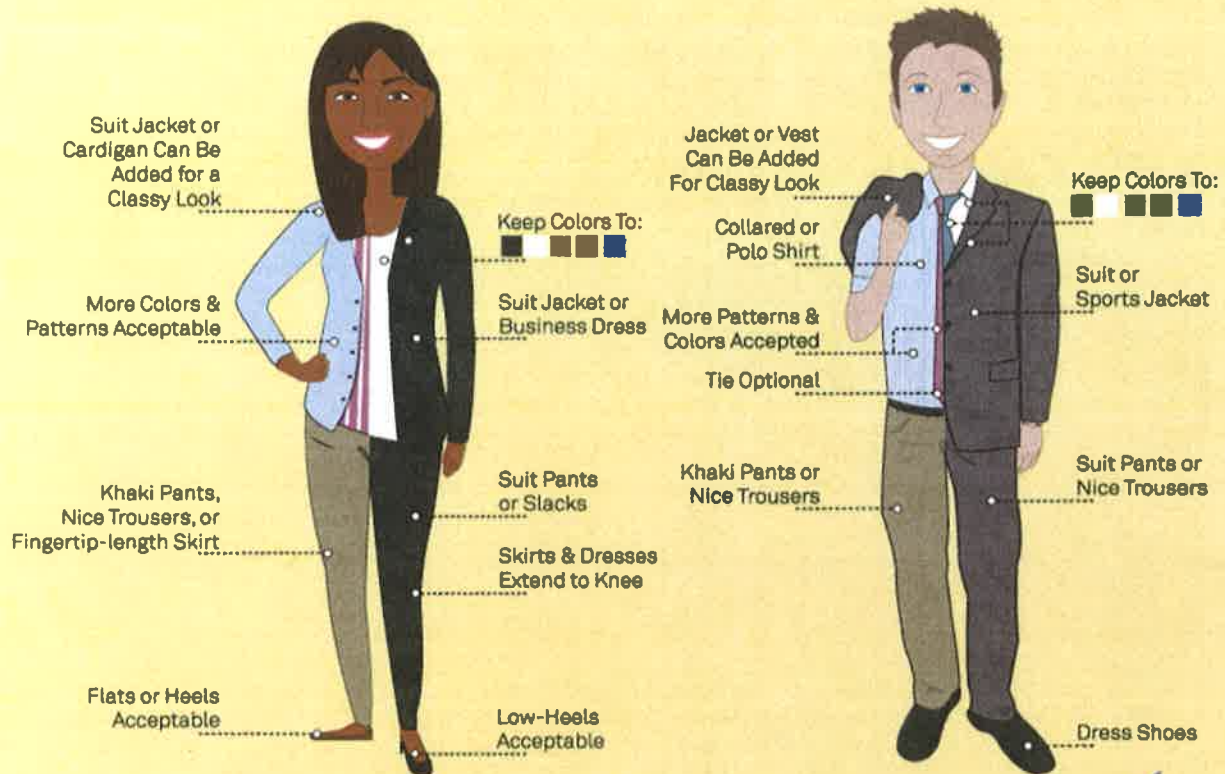
- A sport coat with coordinating slacks
- Slacks with shirt
- Khaki pants
- Tie optional
- Jacket and vest can be added for classy look

Mens Clothing Do's and Don'ts

- Do have your clothes dry cleaned and pressed
- Don't wear loud bright colors, this includes greens, reds, and purples.
- Don't wear jeans or sports clothes
- Do wear clean, polished, conservative shoes
- Don't wear any body piercing jewelry
- Don't wear baseball caps, sunglasses, chains, or necklaces.

Business Casual vs. Professional

Have an interview or professional event coming up? Learn how to decode dress code.



Tips for Success in Any Business Situation

- 1 When in doubt, dress conservatively.
- 2 A suit (suit & tie for males) will suffice in most situations
- 3 Make sure your outfit is wrinkle-free.
- 4 Stick with solid colors and tighter-woven fabrics or simple patterns.
- 5 Accessories should be kept simple: basic pumps, modest jewelry, light make-up & light perfume.
- 6 Wear a belt and a watch.
- 7 Be sure your hair is neatly trimmed or groomed. Avoid the "messy" look.
- 8 Shirts with lettering or graphics should not be worn.
- 9 Check your outfit for missing buttons, lint, or a crooked tie.
- 10 A skirt should be no shorter than the tips of your middle fingers (or just above the knee for good measure).



Dress for SUCCESS!

Recommended standard or dress for career fairs and interviews.

Wrong

- T-shirts and sweatshirts
- Sleeveless shirts and crop tops
- Shorts
- Sweatpants
- Denim jeans
- Sundresses
- Sneaker/Athletic shoes
- Open-toed shoes
- Hiking boots
- No socks or hosiery
- Miniskirts



Right

- Shirts with collars
- Modest neck lines
- Tucked-in shirts and tops
- Sports coats
- Polo-style shirts
- Khaki-style pants
- Casual slacks
- Two-piece dresses
- Socks or hosiery
- Loafers
- Casual shoes

