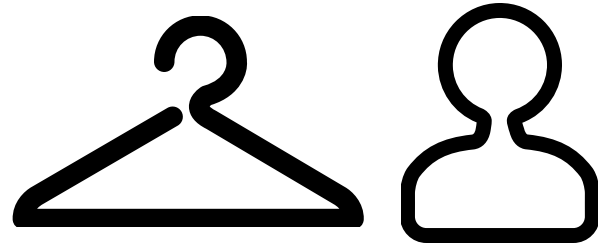


PROFESSIONAL DRESS: WHAT TO WEAR



FOLLOW THE 5 Ts TO ROCK YOUR PROFESSIONAL ATTIRE

Terrain

- Start by navigating the terrain or culture of the organization. What is acceptable dress?
- Do some research. Consider asking the individual that invited you for the interview, examine the company website to see how people dress, or stop by at the end of the day or during a shift change time and see what employees are wearing.
- A general rule to follow: **always dress at or slightly above the type of dress that you observe.**

Tailored

- Your appearance should look tailored and well put together. Think crisp lines and shape.
- Curly and straight hairstyles are both considered to be professional, and they should be shaped and styled. If you have a tendency to touch/flip your hair, pull it back so that it's out of your eyes.
- No matter if you are wearing a suit, dress slacks, or a business skirt, it should be pressed with a proper crease. Check your outfit over for any loose threads or tags left on clothing.
- Never leave the brand tag that is often sewn near the jacket cuff – also remove the threads that hold together the tails on a new jacket/skirt before wearing it.
- Always steam or iron new pieces of clothing - avoid wearing it right out of the bag. New and unwashed clothing can tend to have an odor as your body heats up, so always wash or dry clean prior to wearing.
- Shoes should be cleaned and shined and always wear socks or hosiery – avoid bare legs.
- If you wear make-up, make sure that it is applied conservatively.

Traditional

- In today's professional world, portraying a traditional and conservative image can often be seen as a positive thing.
- If you are unsure what to wear, reach out to other industry professionals in your network to see how traditional your dress should be. Some industries will be more lenient than others.
- Traditional clothing is recommended because you want to leave the interview and/or networking event and **be remembered for your knowledge and experiences shared**, not for a non-conforming, unkempt appearance.
- Don't forget that once you are hired, in many cases, you will have some flexibility with your daily dress.

Tone

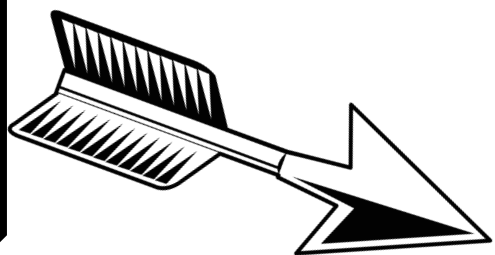
- Be remembered for your answers and conversation; not for your busy patterns and bright colors. **When it comes to professional attire, less is more!**
- Natural/clear tones are best for nail colors, in addition to any neutral, medium, and dull red tones.
- Try to avoid dark color tops and instead wear solid color shirts in light colors such as white, cream, blue, etc.
- Suit jackets and sport coats should be darker than the shirt and complement any tie or other accessory being worn.
- Wearing a belt? It should match your shoes.
- Open-toe shoes are not professional attire. Stick to closed-toe shoes, flat/low heel, leather, or faux leather with matching socks.

Trimmings

- Any accessories or trimmings should complement your outfit.
- Tie colors and stripes should coincide with the color and style of the shirt and suit you are wearing.
- Avoid anything too flashy or too big - no more than two rings and opt for stud earrings, rather than long dangling earrings.
- Dangling, loose bracelets are potentially distracting during your interview. Do not wear these.
- Understand that some organizations find it acceptable for those who identify as women to wear earrings but no one else. This is why it's imperative to navigate the terrain and understand the corporate culture prior to choosing what to wear.
- When it comes to professional interactions (interviews, networking events) "flashy" is generally a no-no in terms of clothing – stand out for your answers and experiences rather than for what you are (or are not) wearing.

Please note: What employers/organizations define as professional attire can vary. This largely depends on the industry, type of job you accept, where you live, etc.

Here is a final checklist before you head out the door for that interview or networking event:



DON'T FORGET!

- Keep your cell phone turned off and away
- Carry any documents in a professional binder or padfolio
- Only take one bag or tote

- _____ Shirt is clean, no spots, neatly ironed, and no tags or loose threads
- _____ Appropriate tie or other accessory with no marks or stains
- _____ Suit jacket is clean and neatly pressed (and the jacket fits)
- _____ Clothing is NOT too tight, too short, too long, too revealing
- _____ Dark leather shoes are polished and clean (up to 3" heels and no higher)
- _____ Jewelry is conservative and not distracting
- _____ Wearing under arm deodorant or antiperspirant
- _____ Colognes and/or perfumes are very conservative (no cheap body sprays)
- _____ Head and facial hair are clean and well-groomed
- _____ Finger nails are trimmed and clean (people will be paying attention)
- _____ Teeth are brushed, breath is in check as needed (e.g., mints not gum)

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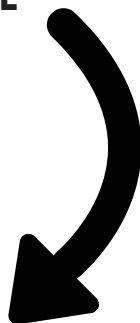
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