

# What Not To Wear

**Don't take casual to the extreme.** Take a lesson from the job seeker who made the mistake of wearing sweatpants to an interview: You will not be taken seriously if you look like you just strolled in from the gym.

Even if a company has a very laid-back atmosphere, maintaining a professional look is essential. It provides instant credibility and signals to the interviewer that you take the position seriously. If you're working with a recruiter, ask him or her for insight into the interview dress code. When in doubt, err on the conservative side and wear a suit, sport coat or blazer.

**Don't overdo it.** You don't want the most distinctive thing about you to be the scent of your cologne still lingering in interviewer's office hours after you've left. Avoid overpowering fragrances; many people are sensitive -- even allergic -- to perfumes and colognes.

The same guidelines apply to makeup and jewelry. While these aspects of your wardrobe can allow you express your personality, be judicious in your choices. Less is usually more.

**Don't forget about comfort.**

Avoid wearing clothes that itch or constrict your movements. You want to exude confidence during an interview, not look like you have a rash or can't breathe. A well-fitting outfit also can put you at ease.

Test-drive your clothing choices ahead of time to ensure everything fits well and makes you feel good about your appearance. This is especially important if it's been awhile since you've donned your interview suit. Repair or replace anything that is torn or soiled.

Another tip: Dress in layers so you can be at ease regardless of the temperature.

**Don't show too much skin.** One job candidate we heard about arrived to the interview in a micro-miniskirt and fishnet stockings. Another wore a leather vest without a shirt underneath. If you want the job, avoid attire that is more fitting for the club than the office. Midriff-baring T-shirts, low-rise pants or mini-everything should be shoved back in the closet.

**Don't avoid the mirror.** Conduct a final head-to-toe assessment before leaving the house to ensure that everything -- including your hair, nails and shoes -- is presentable. Do the same when you get to the interviewer's office. A quick trip to the restroom will allow you to make final adjustments before meeting with the hiring manager.

Remember, when it comes to attire, simple is best. What you wear won't get you the job, but it may take you out of the running. In the end, it's best to focus attention on your abilities, not your favorite funky shirt, shoes or skirt.