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Spotlight on job opportunities and employment trends

Feel comfortable, but not casual, in your interview suit

The way you dress for an interview can play a big part in whether you'll be considered for the job. First impressions are everything, and what you're wearing is a huge part of the impression you're making. Allison Schwartz, a life coach with clients all over Los Angeles, says that within the first seven seconds of meeting someone you're making an impression.

"Before you even open your mouth, an impression is made," says Schwartz. "And it takes about 20 times of seeing them to change that first impression. So in that sense it's very important — you need to do everything you can."

Schwartz says the first thing you can do when dressing for an interview is making sure your clothes are comfortable.

"Psychologically it's really important that you feel comfortable," she says. "Most people in general feel nervous, so when you wear clothes that you don't wear very often and you feel uncomfortable,

that will only add to the tension. You need to wear clothes you feel good in."

Schwartz says to do some preparation a week before the interview takes place.

"For a few days or a week before the interview, get dressed in your interview clothes daily and wear them for at least an hour doing things you'd typically do in a day," she says. "When the time comes for the interview you will feel at home in these clothes, and as a result you will project a more relaxed and confident image."

While feeling comfortable in your clothes is important, you don't want to feel too comfortable by going too casual. Patricia Handschiegel, editor of StyleDiary.net, an online fashion/style magazine, says you should never make the mistake of dressing down for an interview.

"So many times I hear people say that because it's a creative position or something outside of the usual corporate realm that going casual is a good idea," says Handschiegel. "You should always wear a suit or something professional — you can extend your creativity with accessories such as a print camisole or a bold piece of jewelry. But your image still

counts even in less conservative environments."

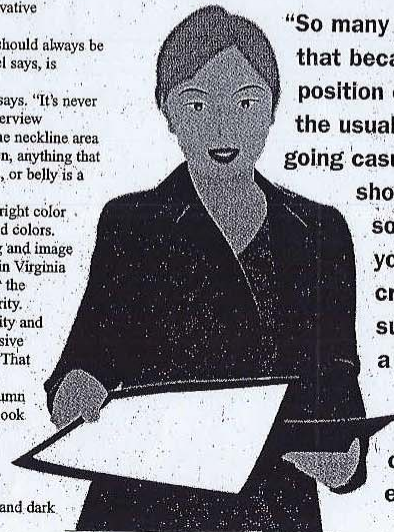
One area in which you should always be conservative, Handschiegel says, is showing skin.

"Keep the skin in," she says. "It's never OK to flash skin in the interview environment. Outside of the neckline area which can be left a bit open, anything that shows your back, cleavage, or belly is a bad idea."

When searching for the right color outfit, be sure to avoid loud colors. Sandy Dumont, a branding and image development professional in Virginia Beach, Va., says the darker the color, the higher the authority.

"Pastels decrease authority and may cause you to look passive and powerless," she says. "That includes shirts and ties."

Barthy colors from the autumn palette make most people look less dynamic because they easily suggest the country weekend. That includes most shades of beige, brown, camel, moss green and dark olive green."



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