

Interview Tips 3: Top Suggestions for Interview Performance

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Once you have prepared and practiced for your interview, it is time to put your game plan into action and perform. When the interview starts, recruiters will assess you in just a few seconds; they read your clothing choices, your handshake, your attitude (posture, voice tone, eye contact, confidence, shyness), and even whether you brought interview materials with you. To create a positive first impression:

1. **Dress Professionally:** Dress professionally for a job interview, regardless of the work environment.

Men's Interview Attire:

- Dark two-piece suit
- Simple tie matching shirt or suit
- Dress shirt (white or pastel)
- Polished brown or black dress shoes
- Belt in similar colour to shoes
- Dark socks – no white athletic socks!
- Little or no jewelry – no earrings
- Neat professional hairstyle
- Clean, trimmed fingernails
- Avoid cologne
- Portfolio or briefcase

Women's Interview Attire:

- Pants or skirt suit (navy, black or dark grey)
- Tailored blouse, shell or knit top
- Suit skirt should cover thighs when seated
- Conservative leather shoes
- Limited jewelry – remove visible body piercings – one earring in each ear is okay
- Professional hairstyle
- Neutral pantyhose
- Light make-up and avoid perfume
- Neatly manicured, clean nails
- Portfolio or briefcase

2. **Arrive 5-10 minutes early:** Do not arrive late (or too early). It is always a good idea to scout out the interview location ahead of time so you know where you are going, what transit to take or where to park.
3. **Be on your best behavior:** Smile and be courteous to everyone you meet (before and after the interview), as you never know who is part of the final decision-making process.
4. **Demonstrate confidence:** Connect with a firm handshake, sit up straight and make eye contact.

Once the interview begins, try to relax and let the interview unfold naturally. Some best practices include:

5. **Be assertive:** Don't be afraid to ask for clarification if you are not sure of what is being asked, or take a moment to frame a response so you can fully answer the question.
6. **Ask questions of your own to assess the organization:** When the employer asks if you have any questions, "No" is the wrong answer as it makes you seem disinterested and complacent. You should always have a few questions to ask to see if the position is a good fit for you. Avoid questions that are answered on the company website or that have already been answered in the interview. Questions to ask could include: *What will the biggest challenge be in this job in the first 6 months? What are some of the qualities you valued in the last person in this position? What do you like most about working for this company? Can you describe a typical day in this position? How would you describe the corporate culture? Do you feel I am a good fit for this job? Do you have any concerns?*

Before you leave the meeting, thank the interviewer, restate your interest in the position (if that is the case), find out what the next steps will be in the hiring process, and ask for business card(s) from the interviewer(s). Final impressions are almost as important as first impressions, so finish strongly. Read on in Tip Sheet #4 for ideas on following up after your meeting.