

# How to Dress For Your Interview - And Get a Job

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*Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society.* —Mark Twain



We hate to admit it, because we personally feel that clothes shouldn't matter. Especially in IT. In a perfect world, a person would be judged at their workplace based solely on their performance. Unfortunately, that's not how the world works.

How you choose to dress each morning reflects how you feel about your job – that you take your position seriously, that you are ready to work and that you pay attention to detail and know what you expect to encounter that day. Would you go to a construction site wearing your best suit? Of course not, you'd go in a hard hat, because it's appropriate for the situation. Appearances matter!

OK, you're saying to yourself, "But I'm a programmer and I work all day making video games! My bosses don't care how I look as long as I perform right?" Well, that would have been completely right a decade ago and it's still quite lax in many IT offices. But IT workplace dressing habits matured in the 2000s and it's not completely out of place to look a little sleeker now. This is especially the case when you're looking for a job.

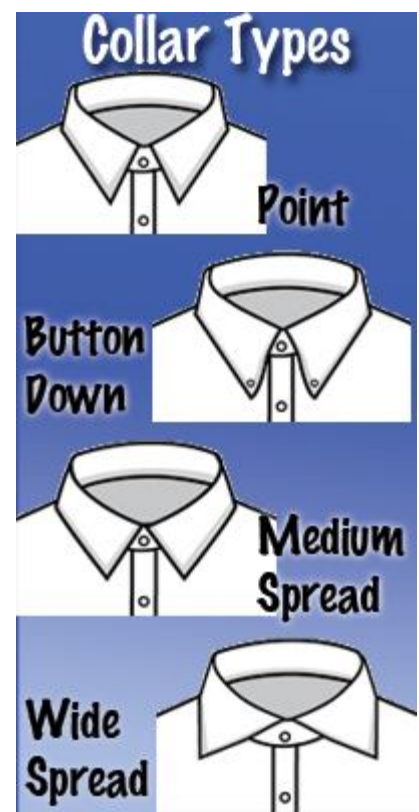
That first interview is key and you don't have infinite time to prove that you are the go-to-person to trust. You need shortcuts that help convey the message, "I am a professional."

Hey, believe us, you don't have to look the most fashionable or look like a model. That's not what you're about. But by avoiding these ten mistakes when dressing for your interview, you'll know you're covering all of your bases when you try to get that job.

## Knots and Collars

Most men don't realize it, but not all collars were created equal. Some are narrow, some are wide, some are in between. You can wear whatever type of collar you want, but how you tie your tie must match it, lest you look like an unprofessional fool. A four-in-hand knot for a tie on a spread collar? No. Wide collars require large knots; narrow collars require small knots.

Here's how to tie the three basic types of knots: full windsor, half-windsor, and four-in-hand *and* how to match your knot to your collar:





**Point** → [four-in-hand](http://www.tie-a-tie.net/fourinhand.html) - <http://www.tie-a-tie.net/fourinhand.html>

**Button down collar** → [half-windsor](http://www.tie-a-tie.net/halfwindsor.html) - <http://www.tie-a-tie.net/halfwindsor.html>

**Medium spread** → [half-windsor](http://www.tie-a-tie.net/halfwindsor.html) - <http://www.tie-a-tie.net/halfwindsor.html>

**Spread collar** → [full windsor](http://www.tie-a-tie.net/halfwindsor.html) - <http://www.tie-a-tie.net/halfwindsor.html>

## Sleeve Lengths

This guy knows what he's doing.

It doesn't matter what it says on your business card if you're handing it out with a hand swimming in fabric. It may sound minor, but if the sleeves of your shirt and jacket are not the right length, you'll look silly. Basic rule of thumb: your wrist is there for a reason.

**For shirt sleeves:** they should go no more than a half-inch past your wrist when you're standing with your arms to your side. When you buy your shirts, you can get ones that just button tightly around your wrist, but there is a better way. If you can, don't buy shirts that come in sizes S, M and L. Get shirts that have both neck and arm measurements.

Figure out what size fits you in a particular brand you like and can regularly afford. Stick to that brand. Shirt sizes are not absolute and even if two different brands of shirts have the same number measurements, they will likely fit differently.

**For jacket sleeves:** They should not go past your wrists when standing with your arms by your side. Period. Ideally, they will fall a half-inch above. Avoid one of the biggest mistakes American men make: buying Long. Unless you're over six feet tall, you probably don't need to buy a Long and should get a Regular.



## The Rumpled Suit Back



You have a chair glued to your back! Okay, not really, but if the back of your suit is covered in wrinkles you look equally ridiculous.

What to do? When you're sitting at a desk or in your car, take your jacket off. If you're on a business lunch and can't take your jacket off, that doesn't mean you have to run to the dry cleaners right after. There's one simple tool all professional men should have. A portable, hand-held steamer. Rowenta makes a great [one for under \\$40](#) that you can keep at home, in the office, or take on a business trip. You don't even need an ironing board to use it! They are well worth the investment. I purchased an older model in 2003 which I still have (and use) today.

## The Rubber Sole



If you want to present your most professional self at the interview, you don't want to be caught in rubber soled shoes. They look clunky — like shoes a teenager wears to church.

Shoes with leather soles are more expensive, but they are yet another subtle sign that can convey a higher level of professionalism. If shoes like this are still a bit too pricey for your budget, there are many brands of shoes that have some rubber and some leather on the bottom but have the same slim profile. The only time you'll see the difference is when you take your shoes off.

# The Jacket Fit



Any suit jacket should fit your shoulders. Too often, men wear jackets that are far wider than their actual shoulders. Some men go too far in the other direction. How do you tell?

**Too narrow:** When you look at your back in a mirror, you'll see the fabric bunching, making small ripples on the top of your back.

**Too wide:** When buying a suit, get the smallest possible jacket size that will fit you. Go up one size at a time. Buy the first size up where those ripples disappear. You don't need any more room.

# The Bottom Button



Suit jackets have two or three buttons. Regardless of the number, remember this simple rule. Never, ever, ever button the bottom button. For a two-button jacket, button the top one. For a three-button, the middle one and, if you like, the top one too.

Under no circumstances should the bottom button be fastened. For one, the suit will not move correctly on your body.

What's more, when seated, men's jackets should be unbuttoned. If not, they don't hang correctly and make your body look strange. When you go to sit down, you shouldn't be fumbling with buttons like you're trying to extract yourself from a straight jacket. If only one is closed, one simple, clean motion has your coat open so you can sit down.

## Pattern Overload



Patterns are popular in men's fashion right now. That doesn't mean your entire wardrobe should be made up of stripes. Clothes on a man should be a quiet backdrop that doesn't distract from the person underneath.

Patterned tie? → Solid color shirt.

Striped shirt? → Solid color tie.

Pin-striped suit? → Solid color shirt.

There are, however, exceptions to these general rules and stylish men can pull off striped combos. But if GQ isn't your bible, odds are you're not one of them.

## Brass Buttons



Jacket buttons come in many different sizes and materials. Jackets also serve many different functions. You would not wear a tuxedo jacket to work. Nor should you wear a jacket that has brass buttons. The brass buttons don't say, "Trusted professional!" They say, "I seem to think I'm a Navy admiral who's forgotten the rest of his dress blues."

Are we too late? Do you already have these button fiascoes in your closet? Don't throw them out, just wear them to dress-casual functions without a tie.

## Light in the Loafers



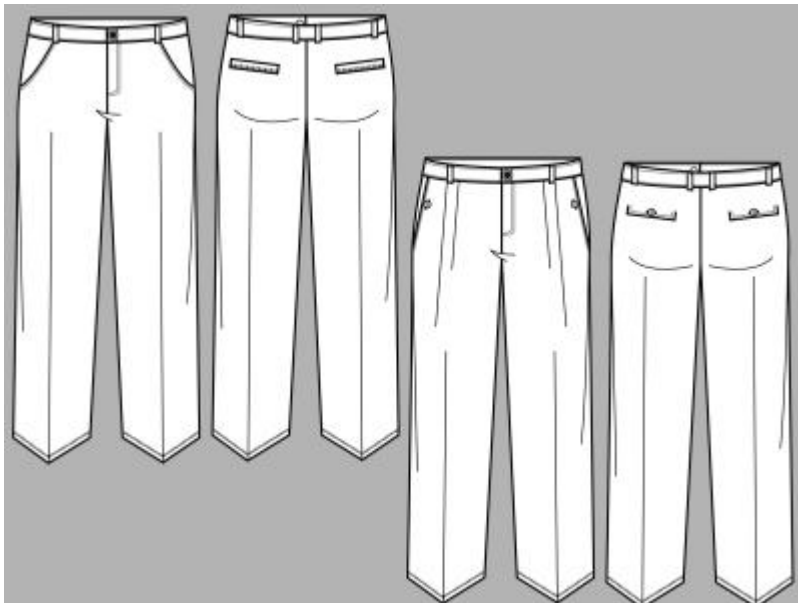
Recently on David Letterman, the Editor of Vogue, Anna Wintour, asked him to show her his socks. Letterman pulled up with dark pant leg to reveal a very light, cream-colored sock. You may not be hanging out with the most powerful woman in fashion any time soon, but you still shouldn't be wearing light socks with a dark suit. Socks should be **darker** than a suit's fabric.

Black suit? → Black shoes and black socks.

Blue suit? → Brown shoes and darker brown socks.

Generally, don't put black and blue together. You don't want to be color coordinated with a bruise.

## Pleated Disaster



In men's pants, a pleat is a small gathering of the fabric in front at the waistline. Generally, they make the leg and seat a little roomier for people who aren't runway model thin.

But like a suit coat, you shouldn't be buying excess pleats. If you're of average weight, flat front pants without **any** pleats (very "in" right now) are the way to go. Need some more room, single pleats...double if you absolutely must. But triple pleated pants? No. No no no no. You'll look like you're wearing windsocks instead of pants.

See? That didn't hurt, did it? Now you know some basic fashion Do's and don't have to worry about it. And for all the IT women out there, don't worry, we'll have a list for you next week.

**Tuesday, December 22, 2009**

[http://insidetechnology.monster.com/benefits/articles/6836-how-to-dress-for-your-interview---and-get-a-job?page=1&utm\\_source=nlet&utm\\_content=it\\_c1\\_20091222\\_FASH](http://insidetechnology.monster.com/benefits/articles/6836-how-to-dress-for-your-interview---and-get-a-job?page=1&utm_source=nlet&utm_content=it_c1_20091222_FASH)