



# IMAGE CONSULTING FOR Women & Men



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# Image Matters

Young graduates out there, you may have the best academic results in the world, but if you have a poor image, you won't garner the respect and credibility you need to impress the interviewer or to deal successfully with others.

So in this issue, we will share some tips to empower the young professionals. You will read about how you can ace your interview by dressing the part. Impress your interviewer with your professional attire other than your resume and interview skills to land that long-awaited DREAM JOB of yours!

Of course, we did not forget about the rest of the men and ladies out there. Sip some tea and enjoy reading about *Decoding Dress Codes - The Right Shirt* as looking the part is a great way to make a positive first impression. Our other article - *Dress up to Look Slim* will benefit ladies who are keen to look great and sensational as looking good is every girl's prerogative, not just the model-thin ones!

Go on, let your image work for you at all times!

Happy Reading!

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## Decoding Dress Codes – The ‘Right’ Shirt

If you have been trying to decode the various dress codes and are still quite clueless, here are some tips to help you ‘get it right’ every time.

### BLACK-TIE

Go for a wing collared shirt with black studs and a bow tie. Alternatively, a plain black tie can be worn with a formal Windsor collared shirt. Shirts with a double cuff look best, as you can wear cufflinks.

### FORMAL

Depending on the event, the shirt that you can wear will vary. For a safe look, a white shirt teamed with a silk tie will not go wrong. Many formal events now allow for suits of different colours, be it black, charcoal or grey, and as a result, will also allow for you to break away from the traditional white shirt. An all black ensemble is most dressy or replace the black tie with a silver one to make a statement at an evening function. Cufflinks, ties and well-polished dress shoes will complete your formal look.

### BUSINESS ATTIRE

Traditionally, men wear white shirts to work. These days, many offices have started opting for contemporary looks, so it’s perfectly acceptable to wear shirts of different colours to the office. You may like to know that lighter colour shirts though project more authority than dark colour shirts.

Whilst cufflinks and ties always look professional, they aren’t always expected in most Singapore offices.

### CASUAL

This means you can let your shirt show more of your personality. It’s a great opportunity to wear different fabrics, colours and styles like linen, short sleeves, prints or even Polo T-shirts. However, avoid any T-shirts without collars or shirts with offensive logos, images or texts. You may pair your top with corduroy casual trousers or dark jeans for a polished look.



**Business Casual – striped shirt with jeans**

When in doubt about a dress code, always check with the host or ask other people what they are wearing to get an idea. If you’re unable to find out before the event, wear a versatile men’s shirt that can be worn easily with or without a tie so you can easily alter your look when you get to the event. It’s always best to be more formal when in doubt rather than be casual and end up insulting your host because being well-dressed is a form of courtesy.



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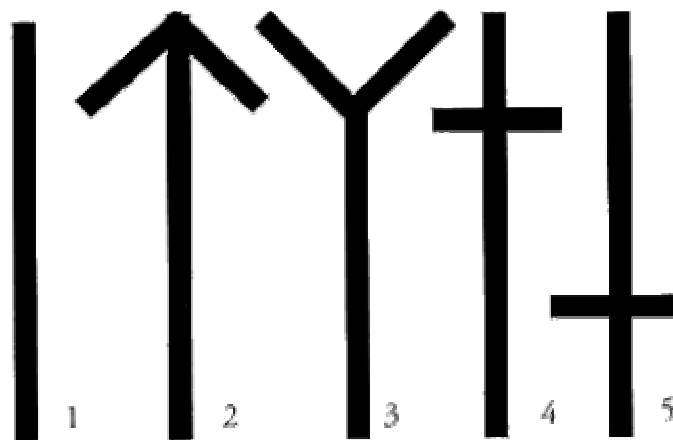


## Dress Up to Look Slim

It is a myth that only skinny people can look good. If you have gained some weight and want to dress up and look slim and sensational, here are a few pointers that may work for you.

- ✓ Avoid wearing lighter colours. Dressing up in solid dark colours makes you look slimmer. Solid colours such as navy are in style.
- ✓ Don't wear tight fitting pants or skinny jeans. Wearing wide leg pants or boot cut jeans create a smooth straight line giving the illusion of length.
- ✓ Wearing one colour from head to toe makes you look taller.
- ✓ Wear high heels, preferably medium to high depending on how comfortable you feel in them.
- ✓ Match your pantyhose to your shoes, skirts or pants as it adds inches to your legs instantly.
- ✓ Use colours to create a vertical line of sight to add height. For example, wear a jacket over a camisole and leave the jacket hanging straight down unbuttoned.
- ✓ Avoid wearing contrasting colours in your tops and bottoms as the strong colour differences visually cuts you up into half at the waist which makes you look shorter than you really are.

- ✓ A single vertical line makes you look taller and thinner and is good for almost everyone except the tall, thin woman. Playing with the lines in your clothes is an important part in your appearance, but lines can be deceiving. Look at the five lines shown here. Which seems longest? Shortest?



The lines are really all the same length, but "3" appears to be longest while "5" seems to be shortest. The tricks played on our eyes by the lines are called optical illusions.

- ✓ Wearing a belt instantly creates a waist even though you haven't got one and makes you look slimmer.



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## Dress for Success for Your Job Interview

Graduated with impressive grades, you are now ready to make a splash in the corporate world. But before you go for that all important interview, make sure your attire is working for you, not against you!

Whatever the job, you want the interviewer to remember you for your personality and performance: not as "the one with the loud tie/short skirt/body art ....". Traditional formal interview dress is the most likely to impress whereas the biggest turnoffs involved casual dress.

We recommend that you dress one level above the position you are applying for in order to build credibility. Dressing in this manner shows your initiative and demonstrates your interest to rise through the ranks.

If you are interviewing for a senior position, a suit is a must. A formal shirt, tie and business pants is the minimum for entry-level positions.

For us, ladies, we have more challenges on hand.

### General Guidelines for Women's Interview Attire:

- ✓ Go for the more conservative business-like attire in black, navy blue or grey colours. Avoid flashy colours, bold prints or elaborate details; don't

look fussy. A skirt suit is more feminine than trouser suit. Always ensure suit is well-fitted as an ill-fitted suit makes you look sloppy.

- ✓ Wear a silk blouse or crisp, tailored shirt underneath your suit for a more polished appearance. Plunging necklines and tight shirts are for after-hours. (I have seen all types come in for interviews during my twelve years in the corporate jungle.)
- ✓ Go for simple and elegant tied-up hairstyles; use styling products to keep hair away from face if your hair is too short to be tied up.
- ✓ Keep make up soft and natural.
- ✓ Jewellery should be simple and tasteful, i.e. pearls. Do not wear too much jewellery.
- ✓ French manicured nails or nails with light nail polish colours or clear coat of polish at the least.
- ✓ Low closed-toe heels (not those killer stilettos) are recommended.
- ✓ Keep all your certificates and papers in a business case or in a tote bag in neutral colours like black, brown or beige.
- ✓ Skin tone hosiery. No fish-net stockings or coloured stockings.



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## General Guidelines for Men's Interview Attire:

- ✓ Interview suits are navy blue, black or charcoal gray, particularly true in more conservative or traditional industries such as insurance, finance, banking, law, and civil service. As far as other colours are concerned, avoid bright coloured jacket suits while earth tones such as olive or beige can seem a tad too casual.
- ✓ Solid suits are best, although subtle pinstripes are also acceptable.
- ✓ Dress shirt should be white or Oxford blue. All-cotton shirts with a spread or point collar, or even a traditional button-down style, are best for job interviews. Pick one that works for your best shape for a better look.
- ✓ A full Windsor knot compliments a spread collar while a point collar or button-down collar looks best with the four-in-hand knot.
- ✓ Conservative tie that coordinates with your suit. Patterned, foulards or traditional striped ties are good choices. Strictly no cartoon characters ties or bow ties. The tie should always be 100% silk as they project a more polished appearance.
- ✓ Shoes should be black lace-ups. Cap-toes and wingtips are the predominant choices, strictly no loafers. Brown shoes are still a bit too fashion-forward for an interview.
- ✓ Socks are not loose and pick one that matches the colour of your shoes.
- ✓ Belt should match shoes (refrain from big metal buckle or metal buckle with huge brand logo)
- ✓ Jewellery should be minimal- probably no more than a wedding band and a watch.
- ✓ For traditional job interviews, cover up any body art, remove all visible piercings (yes, that includes earrings).

Be neatly presented, always check for missing buttons, stains and seam rips. Pick your outfit ahead of time then forget about it - an interview is for you to sell your skills, not your wardrobe.

Pick something that you are comfortable in; no tugging or re-adjusting when you sit. Try it out prior to the interview so that you are comfortable in it.

And don't forget to smile! This is the best fashion accessory!

When selecting appropriate attire for an interview, the idea is to dress smartly, comfortably and keep it low key. This doesn't mean you can't look sharp and well groomed, but you don't want to be remembered for looking sloppy or inappropriate or being dressed in any way that could hurt your chances of landing the job.

## In conclusion

You should bear in mind that your interview is not a one-off event so you should be prepared with an equally appropriate ensemble for the second and subsequent interviews. If you pay attention to the mode of dress of those you see in the office at your first interview, this can serve as your guide for the second interview. Always err on the side of caution, as you definitely don't want your wardrobe standing in the way of your next job.

Remember how you look is a reflection of who you are, keep these tips in mind and showcase your best image, you will look great and your confidence will shine through.