

In-Person Interview Tips — Do's and Don'ts

Do...

Dress Appropriately

- General rule is to dress one level above what you would wear to work
- Personal grooming should be impeccable
- Be scent free and well groomed (hair, nails)
- Be sure clothes are ironed and clean, have polished/clean shoes
- Conservative styles are usually best
- For any office/business position, wear a business suit
- Visit the washroom when you arrive to freshen up

Making a Good Impression

- Treat every person you meet at the interview location with courtesy and respect
- Offer a firm handshake
- Make eye contact, remember to smile!
- Pay attention to the interviewers names and titles and the correct pronunciation
- Exhibit a positive attitude and be friendly!

Interview Details

- Know the exact time and location of your interview
- Know how long it takes to get there, plan for parking, walk from bus stop, or construction issues
- Arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the interview start time (unless you have been asked to arrive earlier for testing or interview prep)
- Bring your reference list, portfolio and an extra copy of your resume and cover letter

Answering Questions

- Take time to think about your answer
- Speak clearly and slowly so that you will be understood
- Maintain eye contact during the interview and sit still in your seat
- Answer questions giving specific examples of your skills and experience whenever possible
- Ask for clarification if you do not understand a question
- Respond to questions and back up your statements about yourself with specific examples whenever possible
- Be thorough in your response, while being concise in your wording
- Be honest and be your best professional self
- Demonstrate a good match between your skills and the employer's needs
- Treat the interview seriously and as though you are interested in the opportunity and the employer even if you realize during the interview that you are not interested
- Exhibit a positive attitude, behave like someone you would want to work with

- Prepare questions ahead of time to ask the interviewer (see the “Questions to Ask the Interviewer” tip sheet)
- Be sure to research the company ahead of time (see the “Interview Process” tip sheet)

Practice - Consider how you will appear from the interviewer's point of view.

- Practice your answers and find the most comfortable yet professional position to sit, so you can sit that way for a long period of time.
- Practice maintaining your poise, despite the question asked.
- Practice with friends from both scripted and impromptu questions to help prepare you for unanticipated topics.
- Practice by using the [VMock Elevator Pitch online platform](#) to practice (see tip sheet “Using Elevator Pitch for Interview Practice”).

Don't...

- Wear perfume, cologne or any other strong scents (many people have allergies and if your scent is overwhelming they may cut your interview short)
- Smell like smoke or food, air out your clothes and don't smoke right before the interview
- Chew gum during the interview
- Arrive too early to the interview, this shows over eagerness and poor use of time
- Appear disinterested or distracted during the interview
- Be arrogant, confidence is appealing but arrogance is rude
- Be unaware of the company; don't ask questions you could research on their web site!
- Fidget or slouch during the interview, show enthusiasm and try to calm your nervousness
- Be too vague about your experience
- Be dishonest, if a company finds out you have been dishonest, it is grounds for withdrawing job offers or firing
- Be unaware of what is on your resume, ensure that you have been involved in writing it so that you can explain what is written in your resume
- Arrive late (it is disrespectful and shows a pattern of what could happen in the future)
- Say negative things about your current or past employer or co-workers, brainstorm ways to answer tough interview questions without being negative
- Answer or look at your cell phone during an interview
- Discuss money/salary in an interview if you can avoid it
- Provide too much unnecessary personal information
- Forget to make eye contact