

10 Tips for What to Wear to a Virtual Job Interview

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With more companies conducting [job interviews over Zoom and other video platforms](#), choosing an outfit has become a whole new ballgame. What looks good in person may look like a sloppy nightmare in video calls. Job seekers are learning how to style themselves from scratch.

[Joseph Rosenfeld](#) is a personal stylist and corporate image consultant who has seen his clients struggle over what to wear in the digital atmosphere.

"It's not just about how you want your clothes to show up on Zoom, although that is a part of it," Rosenfeld said. "It's more of a story about your overall presence. Visuals are really important. That's the prism through which everyone is going to receive your communication. On Zoom, you have just a little bit of real estate to do it."

Rosenfeld shared tips on how to look stylish and maximize your Zoom "real estate" during a job interview.

1. Groom, groom, groom.

Grooming is a major part of personal style, and it's a great way to display your professionalism during a job interview. You may not have the best haircut during COVID-19, understandably, but you should be able to style your hair as neatly as possible, said Rosenfeld. If you wear makeup, put on a little more than usual so that the contrast shows through the fuzziness of your webcam feed.

"Keep a clean face," said Rosenfeld. "I think it's fair and important to say that any gender identity should maintain good grooming standards. Make yourself look bright for the camera so that when you're seen by people, you leave them with a good impression."

2. Background matters a lot.

Your background is just as important as your outfit, and the two go hand-in-hand, according to Rosenfeld. Your Zoom window shows only a small frame, so everything stands out. Keep your background tidy.

“Background has never been a part of personal style as it is now,” said Rosenfeld. “Now that you’re broadcasting from the comforts of home, it is important to set up your background properly so that it’s a proper representation of your professionalism.”

You can use the composition to your advantage and create an interesting, conversation-worthy background, as long as it’s not distracting.

“If you play a musical instrument, why not have one out so people can see? It makes sense that you should be surrounding yourself with elements of the best of you,” said Rosenfeld. “They’ll see that you’re an interesting, multi-faceted person.”

Your background color and lighting will dictate what you should wear. *(See numbers 3 and 4 below.)*

3. Think about color and contrast.

During a **job interview**, you want to stand out in all the right ways. Rosenfeld said that a great place to start is by matching the color of your eyes.

“If you can repeat that on your body, whether it is a top, a blouse, a shirt, an appropriate piece of knitwear, it can be pieces—that’s a wonderful opportunity to amplify the authenticity of a person,” said Rosenfeld. “Eyes to me are always the window of the soul.” Skin coloring, makeup, hair, outfit, accessories, and background should all be working together in medium contrast, according to Rosenfeld.

For example, a woman with light hair and white skin may want to avoid white walls, or else she’ll blend into the background. However, she’ll also want to avoid too much contrast—such as black walls and black sweaters against a white background—or the effect might be “bobble-head syndrome,” where the head almost looks as if it’s floating in space. Someone with darker skin already has the advantage of contrast against a white wall.

4. Set up good lighting.

Unless you're interviewing for a cinematographer position, your hiring manager probably doesn't expect you to have perfect lighting during your Zoom call. However, there's no point in dressing your best if you don't have decent lighting.

"It's important to have the lighting situation in the room be correct so that when you're wearing colors, they show up as boldly or vividly as you may want," said Rosenfeld. Play around with the lighting in your shot. Make sure the sun isn't blinding—and bear in mind, this will change depending on the interview's time of day. Bring in some lamps for warmer tones. Close drapes or throw blankets over your lamps to reel in the bright lights. Be crafty. Your hiring manager doesn't need to know how much duct tape you used to tone down your fluorescents.

5. Avoid busy patterns.

Unfortunately, video call feeds are fuzzy sometimes thanks to buffering issues. Busy patterns are not advised.

"You may be known as a zany person, but it's better to actually tone it down and consider wearing something solid or wearing a pattern in a very controlled way," said Rosenfeld. "You want people to focus on you and not feel as if they have to turn off their camera because they're dizzy."

6. Your outfit should be a "culture fit."

You want to **look as if you fit into the company culture**, according to Rosenfeld. That doesn't always mean wearing a suit and tie, and it certainly doesn't mean dressing down. It means taking cues from the company culture and dressing just a bit fancier.

"Talk to people at the company. Look at the company's website. Understand what the values of this company are, and ask yourself, 'How do I visually align with those values?' Then, amp it up."

Rosenfeld pointed to Apple as an example. The brand's overall style is minimalist—so an interviewee at the company might opt for an elegant and sleek outfit while avoiding tons of embellishments.

“You’re courting the people you’re interviewing with,” said Rosenfeld. “If you’re working for a small startup or a tech giant and they don’t have a dress code, that doesn’t mean you’re going to wear a tank top to a job interview. You’ve got to be able to come up with something that says okay, I get this culture.”

7. Pick a few favorites.

If all goes well, you will likely be called for more than one interview. Pick a few of your favorite outfits in order to feel confident and present.

“Choose a special one,” said Rosenfeld. “Why not take out your favorite shirts or dresses in order to bring your good energy? Have a selection of your faves.”

8. Framing matters.

When framing your shot, make sure your head and the top half of your chest are totally inside the frame. Sit up straight, and center yourself in the shot.

“The framing is about letting people remember what your presence is like in person. Don’t look too slouchy or chill or laid back just because you’re at home. It’s important to let people see you’re taking it seriously,” said Rosenfeld.

For an added bonus, accessorize.

“A lady, for example, can tie a scarf around her neck, which will bring more focus and attention to her face,” said Rosenfeld. “It will make her feel confident and secure in her presence so that she leaves people with that impression. She’s comfortable, confident, focused. You’re focused on her.”

9. Wear pants.

You want to feel professional, focused, and confident. So, wear pants, even if the employer can't see them, said Rosenfeld.

"It is still really part of your presence," said Rosenfeld. "And I'm not trying to say, 'Oh put on heels or dress shoes.' I'm not suggesting that we take it too far. But I do think that it is important to send the right message to yourself, which then sends the right message to other people. Wear pants, 100%."

10. Test beforehand, always.

Always run a quick test before you enter a job interview. That means taking a selfie or seeing how you look through your computer webcam.

"You should be doing this before every call," said Rosenfeld. "Go stand against that background and take a selfie. Honor what that looks like. If it looks wrong, you can always change outfits. That's the advantage of being at home."