



When planning your wardrobe, use the KISS system: Keep It Simple and Sophisticated!

Memorize these colors:

- ✓ Navy Blue
- ✓ Charcoal gray
- ✓ Black
- ✓ Khaki
- ✓ White

These colors should be the foundation of every business wardrobe. Regardless of formality or gender, start with these colors. Color can look great; for example, a brightly colored shirt can punch up a dark gray suit for both men and women. In general, it is better to start with the neutrals just listed and to add color than to start with color and try to find something appropriate to match.

Here are some guidelines for both men and women to keep in mind:

- ✓ **In the suit world, start with the basics:** A navy blue wool suit and a charcoal wool suit, white shirts, black shoes and black belt.
- ✓ **In the casual world, start with the basics:** Khaki pants or skirts, white shirts and black or brown shoes and belt.

Starting your Business Wardrobe:

- ✓ Navy blue or charcoal-gray suit
- ✓ Close-to-knee length skirts (women)
- ✓ Khaki pants
- ✓ White dress shirts or blouses
- ✓ Oxford cloth or polo shirts (men)
- ✓ Silk ties or scarves
- ✓ Dark socks (men)
- ✓ Skin tone and dark blue/black hosiery (women)
- ✓ Black and brown leather belts
- ✓ Black and brown leather dress shoes
 - Pumps (women). Heel should be no higher than two inches.
 - Wingtips or Oxfords (men)
- ✓ Trench coat with a liner (men and women)

Clothing Tips for Women:

- ✓ Start with the following items: a dark jacket, several high-quality T-shirts, a plain white blouse, several twin sets, dark skirts or pants, and two pairs of high-quality leather shoes (brown and black).
- ✓ Twin sets or other sweaters – which can be a great place to add color - provide more finish than just a shirt or blouse, but are less formal than a jacket.
- ✓ Ensembles provide casual variations on the traditional suit. Many items come in coordinated fabrics that can mix and match, such as shirts, jackets, A-line skirts, and pants. Worn together they create a more formal look; worn as separates they produce a more casual look.
- ✓ Dark colors are a good first choice for jackets, pants, and skirts because they wear well. Add light colors as appropriate. Add blouses and shirts, scarves, belts, shoes and jewelry in interesting colors and textures.
- ✓ The keys for suits are fabric, fit and comfort. For autumn, winter and spring, wool is still the best choice. For summer, cotton and linen are good choices, especially if blended with a small amount of stretchy fabric yarn.
- ✓ Skirts should fit well and be long enough.
- ✓ What you wear with a suit or pantsuit is as important as the suit itself. Blouses made of transparent material are inappropriate. High-quality cotton, silk, or micro fiber blends are good choices.
- ✓ Keep shoes functional, attractive, clean and shined.
- ✓ Keep a black Sharpie marker handy to touch up scuffed shoes

- ✓ Low-heeled pumps are suitable for the vast majority of business situations. A pair of black shoes and a pair of tan or taupe shoes for summer are practical.
- ✓ Hiking boots, clogs, running shoes, spike heels, and platforms are often inappropriate for the office.

Clothing Tips for Men:

Business casual generally means khaki pants, a plain polo shirt or a long-sleeved button-down shirt, a V-neck sweater, sometimes a sports coat or blazer, and dark leather shoes.

- ✓ A short sleeve shirt is, by definition, always a casual shirt.
- ✓ Khaki pants are casual for most businesses.
- ✓ Tank tops, shorts, and sandals are unacceptable.
- ✓ Plain shirts are best.
- ✓ Button-down Oxford shirts are casual.
- ✓ Loafers and dark walking shoes are casual and can be appropriate, but sneakers, running shoes, sandals and hiking boots are not appropriate for the office.
- ✓ When choosing a suit, look first for fabric, fit and comfort; look second for style.
- ✓ Fabrics include wool, cotton, linen and various micro fibers. Wool is easily the most versatile of the three, available in either summer or tropic weight and winter weight as well as in a variety of fabric styles.
- ✓ Navy blue, black, charcoal gray and dark brown are the standard colors for business suits. Navy blue or charcoal wool are excellent choices for a first suit. Khaki or tan appears in late spring and summer only.
- ✓ When standing or walking, button the top button of a two-button jacket; button the middle button of a three-buttoned jacket. Unbutton your jacket when sitting down.
- ✓ Have the suit professionally tailored.
- ✓ Brush your jackets and pants at the end of each day and before you leave the house in the morning. If you don't have a clothing brush, you can use masking tape.
- ✓ Ties should be silk, understated, coordinated with the suit and shirt, and should end at the top of the belt.