



Business Casual, What Does It Mean?

There are no hard and fast rules to follow in deciding what to wear when the situation calls for business casual dress, but here are some useful guidelines.

- Look at what others are wearing (especially your supervisor and senior management) and try to wear clothes that are similar in degree of formality. Also, pay attention to the types of colors, materials, patterns, accessories, shoes, etc., that are worn by others in your workplace. If everyone wears neutral and subdued tones, it would probably not be a good idea to wear a hot pink blouse, even if it is a conservative style.
- Ask if the company has a written dress code policy. If they do not, then initiate a conversation about appropriate business casual with your supervisor.
- If you are starting a new job, it is perfectly acceptable to ask what people commonly wear at work (talk to your supervisor).
- If you do not want to ask, do not have an opportunity to ask, or you are going to an information session or other event of that sort, be conservative. It is better to be on the conservative side and show up dressed too formally than to show up underdressed when you are trying to make a good impression.

Suggestions for dressing business casual

For women

- Wool, linen, cotton blend, and stretch material pants and skirts in grey, khaki, black, navy or brown
- Blouses, sweaters, sweater twin sets, and other nice shirts in tasteful colors that coordinate well with your pants or skirt
- Black or brown leather shoes and boots
- Casual and tasteful accessories

For men

- Wool, linen, cotton blend, and high quality khaki pants in grey, khaki, black, navy or brown
- Solid colored or subtly patterned dress shirts and sweaters
- Black or brown leather shoes
- Casual and tasteful accessories

What to avoid when dressing business casual

Along with the suggestions above, there are also some things to definitely avoid when dressing business casual. Many of these don'ts may actually be appropriate in some work places but if you are not certain that they are acceptable, it is best to avoid them.

For women

- Sandals, tennis shoes, extremely high heels (3" or higher), hiking boots, and chunky platform shoes
- Short skirts (anything more than 4 inches above your knees when you're seated is too short)
- Tight pants and skirts
- Loud or distracting prints and colors
- Tank tops and sleeveless shirts
- Clothing with logos or writing
- Heavy or sparkly makeup (in general, avoid wearing large amounts of makeup)
- Strong perfume
- Capri pants
- Shorts
- Distracting or overly creative hairstyles
- Clangy or noisy jewelry

For men

- Sandals, tennis shoes, hiking boots, and shoes with huge soles
- Clothing with large, distracting logos or other writing
- Tight pants and shirts
- Loud or distracting prints and colors
- Strong cologne
- Shorts
- Distracting or overly creative hairstyles
- Hats of any sort