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Interview attire should convey confidence and professionalism

.Your appearance matters, remember to shop for quality and comfort

First impressions are significant during the job search - and nothing makes a bigger first impression than what you wear to an interview. Dressing appropriately for an interview is imperative, and contrary to popular belief, it doesn't have to cost you a fortune.

In order to buy interview clothes on a budget, you need understand yourself and what constitutes a professional look.

"When people are looking for clothes for the interview, they really want to think about two things: how do you want others to perceive you and what are you looking to accomplish?" says Dawn Waldrop, president of Cleveland-based Best Impressions, a company that helps organizations improve the image of their employees.

Before the interview, find out what the dress code is and ask what the person wears who'll be conducting the interview. Then dress one level above what they're wearing. According to Waldrop, if the dress code is professional you'll have a lot of options, but you don't need to go out and buy a dozen new outfits.

"Start with two outfits and build off of those," she says. "For some people, that's black and navy blue, and for others, because of their coloring, it's brown and navy blue. But everyone should start with navy blue. That's a good basic color."

Waldrop stresses that it doesn't need to cost a lot of money to look professional - the trick is understanding yourself.

"Learn what colors and styles look best on you," she says. "We waste money when we buy things that we know we won't wear. Try something on. If you don't feel comfortable in it, don't buy it."

Waldrop says it's better to buy a shirt or a blouse for \$30 than two for \$15.

"Because when you get those two for \$15, where are you next month?" she says. "You're back at the store shopping again because they didn't last."

In the end, always remember to shop smart.

"You'll save money by being in tune with what looks good on you," says Waldrop. "You know when you put something on and you're not sure. You have to trust yourself."