

The Often-Overlooked Interview Advantage: Good Grooming

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There are dozens of factors that affect whether or not you land a job: from your work and expertise to your education and your personality. In addition to these weighty factors, your appearance also counts, in particular good grooming.

Fashion stylist Colin Megaro, the founder of [Planet Style Concierge](#), says that today, "Grooming standards are definitely higher across the board." Megaro, whose company offers style analysis, personal-shopping services, and more, offers up these tips to make sure you're good to go at your next interview.

1. Good grooming is standard, no matter the industry. If you work in the music industry, you may think you can push the boundaries of good grooming -- but you'd be wrong. "Standards do not vary from industry to industry," according to Megaro. "No matter what you do for work you should always be well-groomed. Take some pride in yourself and always present the best you."

2. Nail it! Men and women should always be manicured, according to Megaro. "That's right, gentlemen! A manicure and a good buff go a long way," he states. Megaro, who styles both men and women, advises women to choose neutral colors for nails. "Bright red, black, or jeweled nails are not appropriate for the workplace."

3. Don't look shady with a "five o'clock shadow." The rugged look probably isn't best for the office, either. He says, "Five o'clock shadows aren't OK -- even after five o'clock. If you're heading to an interview from a current job or even from home, schedule it so you have time to wash your face, shave, and make sure your suit is fresh and wrinkle-free."

Facial hair can be fashionable, but it's probably best for men not to rock the ZZ Top look. "If you must have it, it needs to be short and well groomed," he cautions.

4. Put your best foot forward. "Women MUST have a pedicure if they're wearing open-toe shoes, but even if you're a man, your shoes shouldn't look as if you regularly walk on hot coals (unless that's the job you're pursuing)," Megaro counsels. He recommends that shoes always be polished with proper soles. If you scuff a shoe, he reveals, "A Sharpie the color of your shoe can save the day!"

5. Wear it well. Make sure your clothes reflect the job you're pursuing. "When dressing for an [interview](#), research the company and dress accordingly. If you are interviewing at a bank, wear a classic suit with a beautiful tie or scarf. If it's a media company, you have a bit more freedom. Aim for a more modern suit with a great briefcase/bag. You should show your personality and individualism when it's appropriate," he states.

6. Breathe easy. Fresh breath is a priority if you're going on an [interview](#). Megaro points out, "You don't want to smell bad breath on other people and, trust me, they don't want to smell it on you!" He recommends brushing your teeth, carrying breath mints, and keeping mouthwash in your desk or breath strips in your pocket.

7. Use scented products sparingly. If you're wearing cologne or perfume, exercise caution. "Yes, it can be worn, but please do not bathe yourself in it. Remember that some people are sensitive or allergic to smells. Also, no one wants to walk into a wall of cologne," Megaro says.

8. Act natural. Aim for a daytime appearance, especially when pursuing an office job. Megaro, whose company also offers wardrobe consultation and shopping tours, urges job seekers, "Avoid wearing too much makeup or overpowering nail color, and keep hair color to natural tones. We don't need to see bright colors, over-done highlights, or bad wigs."

9. Tress to impress. Beware of overdone hair. Megaro says, "Too much, whether it be color or product, is never attractive!" If you're a bit too coiffed, you may appear high-maintenance, and, possibly, out of touch.