

How to Dress and Prepare for Business Headshots

Guiding principles:

The focus should be on your face and your eyes. Dress and groom yourself professionally. When in doubt, err on the side of being more dressy than casual.

Particulars:

- Dress or casual? Think about the kind of companies you want to work with and the kind of job or client you're seeking. What's their dress standard? Dress to be a little above average for their standards; as on interviews, you'll never go wrong out-dressing your prospective employer in a headshot, as long as you still look like you'll fit in.
- Dominant colors: For suits, jackets or dresses, solid dark or mid-tone colors are best – but nothing darker than navy blue. Quiet pinstripes on suits or quiet prints on dresses are fine, but nothing loud. Patterns or prints distract and date your photo.
- Men, keep your shirt selection basic – usually solid white or blue, no patterns louder than a quiet pinstripe, if that. (And no pinstripe shirts with pinstripe suits!).
- Women, choose white (but only under a jacket) or mid-tone solid color tops (blue, green, wine, purple, etc.) because they are universally flattering. Avoid wearing tops in flesh tones (cream, beige, pastels, peach or yellow) as they will blend your face into your clothes. Unless you're feeling super confident, pass on bright red or orange, and – best advice ever from a fashion consultant – never wear anything whiter than your teeth.
- Accessories:
 - Men: Ties are increasingly optional these days, but you'll never go wrong by wearing one. If you wear one, no loud stripes, checks or plaids. Subtle club ties are best and go with pinstriped shirts or suits. Don't bother with a pocket square in your jacket for this; they're sharp in real life, but a distraction and a cropping problem in a headshot.
 - Women: Some jewelry is good, but avoid loud, large or flashy earrings, necklaces and pins. The time I spend looking at your striking earrings or brooch is time I'm not captured by your intelligent, engaging gaze. Scarves are great for a little contrasting splash of color or a bit of pattern, but if you wear one, keep it subtle.
- Hair and makeup: Keep them simple and natural – only what you need in order to feel attractive and confident. Think work, not wedding, prom, or Saturday night on the town.
- No one is perfectly symmetrical, so let me know which is your “good side,” if you have an opinion on it. (If you have a natural part in your hair, that's usually the good side.)
- Moles, acne, spots, scabs, wrinkles and other uninvited facial features: Don't worry if you have temporary blemishes on your face the day of our shoot – we have Photoshop for that. If you have permanent features on your face such as wrinkles, scars, moles or freckles, be candid with me about how much or how little retouching you would like. My recommendation is to keep your business headshot realistic, but we can often make such features a little less noticeable without misrepresenting you.
- Sleep well the nights before your sitting; that alone is worth the price of a designer makeup artist. Check your teeth, hair and collar right before we shoot.