

Casual Dress: The New Office Wardrobe

Relaxed workplace attire is becoming the norm, not the exception. At many companies across the nation, “casual Friday” has spread to the rest of the week. This is great news for new graduates.

For Men

- A two- or three-button linen suit in a neutral color
- Dockers or Nice khaki pants, with or without pleats
- A black blazer in wool and/or cashmere, or in a lighter-weight fabric such as wool crepe
- High-quality crew-neck or turtleneck sweaters
- Long-sleeved sport shorts that can be worn without a tie
- Corduroy slacks
- Casual vests
- Patterned or colored sport shirts that can be worn without a tie
- Lightweight denim or chambray shirts paired with fun, stylish socks
- Loafers or other shoes that bridge the gap between casual and dress

Stay Away From:

- Shorts and sandals
- T-shirts with words or pictures
- Worn-out jeans (and any jeans at more conservative companies)
- “Grunge” gear
- Athletic wear such as sweats, gym shoes, baseball caps, & team logo jackets
- Anything that’s damaged, threadbare, or not impeccably clean
- Dress shirts worn as casual shirts

For Women

- At least one linen or silk-blend suit (either skirted or with slacks) to form a foundation for your wardrobe
- Chinos or other high-quality, tailored cotton slacks
- Lightweight cardigan, crew-neck, or “twin set” sweaters
- Casual skirts in a modest length (consider corduroy, knit, or suede)
- Cotton polo-style shirts
- Crisp cotton dress shirts
- Vests in interesting fabrics
- Appropriate costume jewelry (tasteful, folk/ethnic pieces are nice)
- A belt in exotic leather (or a good simulation) can really dress up a casual outfit
- Comfortable, low-heeled shoes

Stay Away From:

- Workout wear as office wear
- Size extremes: ultra-baggy pants and/or too-small and cropped T-shirts or sweaters
- “Club” or other too-provocative attire
- Leggings in place of pants or skirts
- Casual shorts- tailored shorts are slightly more acceptable
- Cheaply made clothing
- Open-toed sandals and gym shoe

References:

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