

How can I look my best?

Chapter 20

Your Appearance

Chapter Objectives

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

- **describe** good grooming guidelines related to hair, skin, hands, breath, makeup, and fragrance.
- **plan** a wardrobe for work.
- **judge** the quality of clothing according to fabric, construction, and fit.
- **summarize** the proper care of clothing.

Key Concepts

- Good grooming helps you feel better about yourself and present a professional image.
- With careful planning, you can assemble an attractive, affordable wardrobe for work.
- Caring for your clothes will extend the life of your wardrobe.

Key Terms

grooming
acne
dress code
wardrobe inventory
accessories
fads

Good Grooming

grooming

The way in which people take care of themselves.

Your appearance is an important part of the first impression you make on people. They often form opinions about you based on your personal appearance. Therefore, it is always important to look your best. **Grooming** is the term used to describe how people take care of themselves. Good grooming means being clean, neat, and well dressed.

Hair

The appearance of your hair can add to or detract from your overall appearance. To look your best, keep your hair neatly trimmed and off your face. Whether you choose to keep your hair long or short, be sure to have it cut regularly. It should always look neat and fashionable. Avoid extreme hair colors or styles.

People have different types of hair, so they need to follow different hair care routines to be well groomed. Some people need to wash their hair every day. Others need to wash their hair less often. You should be sure your hair is clean at all times. Ask your hairstylist or barber what type of shampoo and conditioner you should use to keep your hair clean and healthy.

If you choose to have a mustache or beard, keep it clean and neatly trimmed. Having a beard or mustache is acceptable at some jobs but not others. Some employers have rules about hair length and facial hair. Check to see if your employer has such rules.

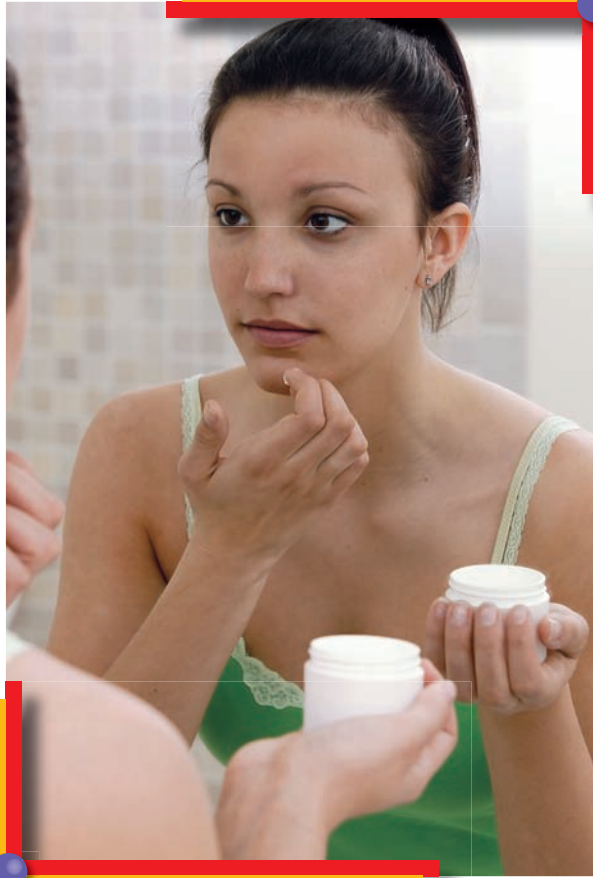
Skin

To look fresh and healthy, your skin must be kept clean. That means your entire body. Bathe or shower daily. Be sure that you look clean and smell fresh when you go to work. Use deodorant or antiperspirant to help keep you fresh.

acne

A skin disorder caused by the inflammation of the skin glands and hair follicles.

Many people, especially teens, have acne. **Acne** is a skin disorder caused by inflammation of the skin glands and hair follicles. It may result in blemishes on the face, neck, scalp, upper chest, or back. If you have acne, take extra care to keep your skin clean, 20-1. If you are worried about your complexion, seek a doctor's advice.

**20-1**

Good grooming habits include bathing daily and caring for your complexion.

Hands

In the workplace, shaking hands is a common practice. Since this gives people a chance to notice your hands, you should keep your hands clean and well manicured. You should be sure your nails are smooth and clean. Keep them at a reasonable length. Women may choose to polish their nails. Polished nails should always be kept fresh. Chips in the polish should be repaired daily. Nail polish is not allowed in many foodservice jobs. Be sure you know your workplace policy.

Breath

Having fresh breath is important when you work with other people. One factor that affects the freshness of your breath is whether your teeth and gums are clean and healthy. You need to brush and floss your teeth daily to keep them clean. You should visit your dentist regularly to keep your teeth and gums healthy. You may also want to use mouthwash to freshen your breath.



Community Connections

Contact your local department store to invite guest speakers to your class. Invite a consultant from the cosmetics counter to demonstrate the proper way to apply and wear makeup. Also, invite the men's department manager to share how to select dress clothes, tie a tie, and coordinate business casual clothes.

Makeup

If you choose to wear makeup, carefully select the proper type. When you like your appearance, you will be able to turn your attention away from yourself. You will be able to think of others and concentrate on your work.

Makeup is proper for women to wear on most jobs. The key to wearing makeup well is using flattering colors and keeping it light, 20-2. If you are uncertain about what colors and products are right for you, go to a local department store. Ask the skin care consultants to help you choose the makeup that is best for you.

Fragrance

Sometimes individuals wear a fragrance to work. Usually all types of after-shave lotion, cologne, hair spray, and perfume have fragrance. When wearing grooming products, be sure their fragrances are very light and pleasant. Fragrances that are too strong may annoy your coworkers or customers or cause others to have an allergic reaction.

20-2

Proper makeup application can improve women's appearance and confidence.



Your Reading

What does good grooming mean?



Wardrobe

Different types of jobs require different types of clothes. People who work on farms or in construction can wear jeans and T-shirts to work. People in offices must wear more formal clothes to work, such as jackets and dressy shirts. Whatever work you do, remember that your clothes say something important about you. The way you dress has an effect on how people think of you. Your clothes should always be neat and clean, no matter what work you do.

Dress Codes

Practically all workplaces have a dress code. Many schools have dress codes, too. A **dress code** is a set of rules that individuals must follow regarding clothing and general appearance. Find out what your place of work requires. For instance, a company may require you to wear a uniform, special footwear, or a lab coat.

Some companies have dress codes because they have a certain image they want their employees to maintain. For instance, an accounting company may want its employees to convey a professional image by wearing suits and dressy clothing. Employees may be required to cover visible tattoos or remove body piercings. Other companies have dress codes for safety reasons. A distribution company, for instance, may require its warehouse employees to wear hard hats, 20-3.

dress code

A set of rules that individuals must follow regarding clothing and general appearance.



20-3

Many company dress codes include policies to keep employees safe.



Community Connections

Many schools have dress codes for students. Organize a debate on having a school dress code. Invite parents, students, and administrators to be a part of the panel. Provide pictures and suggestions for what clothes would be acceptable if a dress code were imposed. Identify the benefits of having a dress code. If your school already has a dress code, organize a debate about what changes are needed.

wardrobe inventory

A list of all the clothes and accessories found in a person's closet and drawers.

accessories

Items that complement a wardrobe, such as shoes, handbags, belts, neckties, and jewelry.

A trend in workplace is *relaxed dress codes*. This means wearing casual clothes, such as men wearing trousers and knitted shirts with collars, and women wearing informal blouses or sweaters with slacks. Other names for this trend are *corporate casual*, *business casual*, and *workday casual*. Casual dress days were once reserved for Fridays, but more employers are allowing casual clothing on other days as well. However, business dress is usually required for meetings with clients or customers.

A relaxed dress code is not the same as no dress code. Ripped jeans, cut-offs, shorts, halter tops, and clothing you would wear to the beach are not suitable items for the workplace. With suitable casual clothes, workers can feel more comfortable on the job and still convey a professional image.

Jewelry

Company dress codes may apply to jewelry as well as clothing. In some work settings, jewelry can get caught in machinery and become a safety hazard. Employees may not be allowed to wear long chains, earrings, rings, necklaces, bracelets, or watches. Where jewelry is allowed, it should be chosen with care and worn in moderation. Simple pieces that accent an outfit are a better choice than dramatic, overpowering items.

Wardrobe Planning

Before you buy new clothes for work, take time to determine what you need. If you are unsure about what you should wear on the job, look at the clothes that other employees wear. Then, review your wardrobe. Do your clothes seem compatible with that workplace? If not, you will need to do some planning to assemble an appropriate wardrobe.

The first step in wardrobe planning is to know what you already have. A good way to find out is to take a **wardrobe inventory**. This is a list of all the clothes and accessories you have in your closet and drawers. **Accessories** are items, such as shoes, handbags, belts, neckties, and jewelry that are needed to complete outfits. As you make your wardrobe inventory, briefly describe the color and condition of each item. For instance, you may have a white shirt that is in good shape and a blue shirt that needs replacing.

Once you know what you have, you can decide what to add or replace. Make a list of exactly what you want or need to buy. Note the style and color of each item on the list. As you do this, think of what you will wear with each new piece of clothing or accessory. Plan complete outfits. Don't buy items that won't go with anything else in your closet.

If your job requires you to wear a dressy wardrobe, begin by buying a few basic pieces of clothing. You can add to them later when you can afford to do so. If your job does not require a special wardrobe, then you may be able to wear many of the clothes you have now. No matter what you wear to work, always be sure your clothes are clean and neat. See 20-4.

Avoiding Fads

As you plan your wardrobe, remember that fashions constantly change, but many of the changes are fads. **Fads** are items that are popular for a short period of time, perhaps one or two seasons. Pants with flared legs and ankle socks with lace ruffles are examples of fads. Avoid spending a lot of money on fads. Instead, look for classic styles that will always be popular. Oxford shirts, straight-leg pants, and straight skirts are all classic styles.

fads

Clothing items or styles that are popular for a very short period of time.



20-4

Even employees who do not have a dress code should make sure their work clothes are neat and clean.

Shopping for Quality

Always try to buy clothes of good quality. They may cost more, but they will look nicer and last longer than clothes of less quality. One well-made shirt for \$40 may be a better buy than three shirts of less quality totaling \$40.

The three signs of clothing quality are good fabric, construction, and fit. Check all three before you buy.

Fabric quality is judged by how the material looks and feels. In general, natural fibers, such as cotton, offer comfort. Synthetic fibers, such as polyester, help prevent wrinkles. The labels in your clothes list the fiber content and provide clothing care directions.

The construction of clothing refers to the way clothes are put together or sewn. In quality clothes, the seams are straight and securely stitched. Zippers and pockets lie flat. Buttons are secure. See 20-5. Stripes, plaids, or other patterns in the fabric match at the seams.

20-5

Good construction is a sign of quality clothing.



Clothes must fit properly to look good. Use the following guidelines to judge fit:

- Movement should be comfortable when the garment is on.
- A garment should lie smoothly across the body without wrinkling, bunching, or sagging.
- Shirt or blouse sleeves should be a little longer than jacket sleeves.
- Men's ties should extend to the belt.
- Dress or skirt hems should not be too short.
- Pants should be long enough to extend to the tops of shoes but not to the floor.

Laundry and Ironing







No matter how expensive your clothes are, they will look cheap if they are dirty or cleaned improperly. You need to make sure your clothes are cleaned appropriately. They will look better and last longer if you do.

Every clothing item must have a firmly attached, readable care label. This label, which may show symbols instead of words, explains how to clean the item. See 20-6. Care labels can be fused, glued, or sewn inside. Many clothing items can be washed in a washing machine. If not, you will need to wash them by hand or have them dry-cleaned.



Making a Difference

Dress for Success® is a not-for-profit organization that provides professional clothing and career development resources to disadvantaged women. Visit **dressforsuccess.org** to learn how your school can organize a suit drive. The suits will be given to women who can't afford to purchase a professional wardrobe.

International Symbols on Care Labels	
	This symbol means it's safe to machine wash: one dot, use cold water; two dots, warm; three dots, hot.
	A triangle means it is safe to use bleach.
	A drying symbol means machine drying is safe: one dot, use low heat; two dots, medium; three dots, high.
	An iron tells how to press: one dot, cool setting; two dots, medium setting; three dots, use a hot iron.
	A circle means that it is safe to dry-clean the garment.
	An X through a symbol means do not use.

20-6

International symbols on care labels tell consumers how to care for their garments.

Hand-washing means the clothes must be soaked in soapy water and washed by hand. After soaking them a few minutes in a clean sink or tub, gently rub them with your hands. Then rinse them thoroughly in clean water. Dry them on a hanger or flat on a rack, depending on the care instructions. Some hand-washed items can be dried in a dryer on a *gentle* setting with low or no heat.

Clothes must be dry-cleaned if their labels say *dry clean only*. The cost of dry cleaning can be expensive. Shop around to find a cleaner that does a nice job at reasonable prices. If you must dry-clean clothing frequently, be sure to include this expense in your monthly budget.

In addition to having clean clothes, be sure your clothes appear ironed. Ironed clothes have no wrinkles. They look smooth and neat. They give you a more professional appearance. See 20-7. Some fabrics need to be ironed more than others. Linen wrinkles easily, while polyester resists wrinkling.



Your Reading

What aspects of a person's appearance does a dress code cover?

20-7

Wear wrinkle-free clothes to present a professional image in the workplace.



Summary

You should always try to look your best. Your appearance affects the way other people think of you. Looking your best also helps you feel good about yourself.

Good grooming includes keeping your hair, skin, and hands clean and attractive. It includes keeping your breath fresh and using makeup and fragrances wisely. It also includes wearing clothes that are clean, neat, and appropriate.

Different types of work require different wardrobes. When you start a job, find out what the other workers wear. Then make plans to put a similar wardrobe together.

As you shop for clothes, avoid spending a lot of money on fads. Look for signs of quality in clothing. After buying clothes, be sure to care for them properly.



Reviewing Key Concepts

1. Give one good-grooming tip for each of the following:
 - A. hair
 - B. skin
 - C. hands
 - D. breath
 - E. makeup
 - F. fragrance
2. What types of jewelry are safety hazards in some jobs?
3. What are two reasons for a company dress code?
4. What is the first step in wardrobe planning?
5. List five examples of accessories.
6. Why avoid spending a lot of money on fads?
7. What are three signs of quality clothing?
8. Name three guidelines for judging the fit of clothes.
9. Why should clothes be properly maintained?
10. Where can you find washing and drying instructions for your clothes?

Building Academic Skills

1. **Writing.** Write a written response to the following questions: Do current clothing and grooming fads conflict with the good-grooming advice discussed in the text? State your opinion in two or three paragraphs.
2. **History.** Research the historical clothing worn in the United States during a specific era or in a specific region. Share your findings with the class, providing pictures wherever possible.

Building Technology Skills

1. Conduct online research to determine Web sites that provide information on grooming. Make a list of Web sites that offer suggestions on the following: hair care and styling hair, makeup and facial care, oral hygiene, and care for hands and nails. Share your information with the class.
2. Conduct online searches for how to plan a wardrobe. Investigate ways to mix and match outfits and determine appropriate colors and styles. Present your findings to the class.
3. Create a virtual model at mvm.com. Dress your model in an outfit for a relaxed dress code. E-mail your model to your classmates and have them evaluate whether you made appropriate choices.

Building Career Knowledge and Skills

1. Develop a weekly grooming chart for yourself. List what you will do daily and weekly to stay well groomed.
2. Visit several stores that sell clothes of various styles, qualities, and prices. Look for both fads and classic styles. Compare the fabric, construction, and fit of different clothes. Give an oral report about what you learned.
3. Take an inventory of your wardrobe. Identify items that are fads. Shop online for accessories that can update and add interest to your wardrobe. Make a list of what you would need to add to your wardrobe to dress appropriately for your chosen career path.
4. Call three dry cleaners in your area. Make a comparison list of their prices for cleaning each of the following: a man's suit, dress, coat, sweater, and pair of slacks.
4. Research ways to create different outfits using a few pieces of clothing. Identify basic pieces you already own or could borrow from family members.
5. Research ways to stretch your clothing dollars. Write a report of your findings.

Building Workplace Skills

Visit one place where you would like to work to observe how people are dressed. Make an appointment with someone in the personnel or human resources department to discuss the organization's dress code. Obtain a copy of the dress code, if one exists. Find out what type of clothing is forbidden and what the penalty is for wearing these to work. Present your findings to the class in an oral report. Create a poster to use during your report that shows the do's and don'ts of dressing for work.