

Taking Care of Your Personal Image



The way you take care of your body and anything you put on it is an important part of your image. Paying attention to grooming demonstrates respect for yourself and for others. The operative words are *neat* and *clean*.

Taking Care of Your Person

When you attend to personal grooming, do it at home or in a restroom, not in public. Consider the following:

- *Hair*: Clean, shiny, well-cut hair looks great and never goes out of style. Comb it often to keep it neat.
- *Nails*: The basics of nail care include neatly trimmed nails and cuticles, both of which can be done at home. If you wear polish, maintain it regularly. If you're a nail biter, keep your nails short and filed to prevent them from looking ragged. And don't forget your feet when wearing open-toed shoes!
- *Breath*: To keep breath fresh, try to brush your teeth after lunch as well as in the morning and at night. Regular flossing and brushing your tongue helps control odor. Breath mints can help, and it's a good idea to keep some handy. It brushing, flossing, and mouthwash don't take care of it, pay a visit to your dentist or doctor.
- *Body odor*: A daily bath or shower and use of a combination deodorant/antiperspirant is the best defense against body odor. So is showering before returning to work after a lunchtime workout.

- *Perfume and cologne:* Apply perfume or cologne sparingly. If your scent lingers in the room after you leave, you're wearing too much. Unfortunately, the perfume you love may offend someone else or even cause an allergic reaction. Some workplaces have "no scent" policies, so check yours out. When choosing a scent, opt for something light for daytime or office, and save the heavier or more "romantic" scents for the evening.

Q: My friend has body odor so intense that people joke about him behind his back. I'd like to help him. Is there a tactful way to broach the subject?

A: Understandably, many people are reluctant to take on this difficult conversation. "Couldn't I just send an anonymous note or leave a hint like a stick of deoderant?" While easy on you, it would be humiliating and hurtful to your friend and now is the time to be a good friend. Before approaching him, have these goals in mind:

- Have the conversation in private.
- Focus on your friendship and your concern for his success, not the problem.
- Listen to what he has to say, and offer suggestions if you can.
- Assure him that the conversation will remain completely confidential.

You might say, "Tom, I'd like to talk to you about a difficult issue. I hope if the situation were reversed that as my friend, you would talk with me. Are you aware that you have body odor?"

Now that you've done the hard part and broached the subject, be sympathetic and supportive. If he reacts angrily, assure him of your friendship. Often when this happens, the person will come back and thank his friend once he's thought it over.

Taking Care of Your Wardrobe

Clothes send a message about how you want others to see you. Especially at work, clothes should be spotless at the start of each day; soiled or sloppy work clothing reflects on both you and your employer. Clothes should be

- *Clean*: Don't be tempted to wear anything with spots or stains, or that's just plain dirty. Sometimes even clean clothes may not be as fresh as they appear, so apply the sniff test.

- *Neat*: Clothes should be free of wrinkles, lint, holes, and missing buttons. Hems should be intact. Investing in a few clothing-care tools and learning how to use them is also a good idea. Some of the basics are--

- Iron and ironing board- Learn how to iron a blouse or dress shirt, trousers, and skirt.

- Clothes brush or lint roller- Hang one on the back of your closet door and keep one at work or in your car. Even if your clothes are clean, lint and pet hair will detract from your appearance.

- Basic sewing kit- Learn how to sew on a button and repair a basic hem.

- Shoe shine kit- regular care of your shoes--and other leather goods--makes them look great and protects your investment.