

**How to prepare for your Job Interview**

You earned your certification, and you’re ready to land your first allied health job. Or perhaps you’re already in the field, but you’re looking to move on or move up. Getting the job is about luck, but mostly it’s the luck you create. As the Roman philosopher Seneca so famously said, “**Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity**.” So, create your luck and follow these 10 tips to prepare for your job interview.

1. **Research the company and interviewer**

One of the great things about entering the healthcare industry is that there’s a diverse range of employers to choose from. From hospitals and pharmacies to assisted living facilities, each employer will have a distinct work environment and culture. Do as much research as you can about the company and the person who will be interviewing you on sites such as [LinkedIn](http://www.linkedin.com/), [Glassdoor](http://www.glassdoor.com/), and, of course, the company's website. The interviewer will be impressed if you can bring up a piece of news or company history you read on their website, and it will show them that you are genuinely interested in the business.

1. **Tweak your resume**

Look at the job requirements and make tweaks to your resume based on the position. This will help increase your chances of rising to the top of the resume stack. BONUS: Use words they use in their job description to show that you are the candidate they’re looking for! And be sure to check out our [resume tips for allied health professionals](https://info.nhanow.com/blog/resume-tips-for-allied-health-professionals).

* **No experience? No problem:** *If you are new to the industry, focus on your skills and qualified credentials rather than your job experience*.
* **Give it thorough proofreading:** *Nothing turns off an employer like a glaring spelling error. Make sure you and at least one other person proofread your resume before sending it.*
* **Be mindful of your online presence:** *One of the first places employers research your background is online.*[*Make sure your social accounts*](https://info.nhanow.com/blog/healthcare-job-seekers-beware-of-these-social-media-mistakes)*don’t include any photos or content you wouldn’t want a future employer to see.*

**(Bonus: Consider creating or updating a profile on**[**LinkedIn**](https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-healthcareer-association)**, the social network for professionals.)**

1. **Anticipate resume questions**

Your resume is your first impression on your potential employer. If it leaves any question marks, be prepared to answer them. Do you have a two-year gap in your resume without any experience? That can be a red flag. Not to worry, as this isn’t a deal-breaker; just be prepared to explain why. Perhaps you were on sabbatical, traveling the world, or you were doing some soul-searching to discover what you wanted to do. Or maybe you took two years to focus on being a parent. Employers will respect your honesty and the fact that you march to the beat of your own drum.

1. **Rehearse some answers**

Prepare some answers for questions you think might come up in the interview. This will vary by position, but here are a few common ones, especially in allied health positions:

* Tell me about yourself.
* What made you interested in working here?
* What’s your biggest strength?
* What’s your biggest weakness?
* Why did you leave your last position?
* What are your career goals?
* Can you give an example of a time you’ve worked well under a stressful situation?

1. **Prepare some questions of your own**

Interviews go two ways. They are interviewing you to see if you’re a good fit for the position, and you are interviewing them to see if it’s a good fit for you. It’s not very different from dating, really. At the end of the interview, you’ll likely be asked, “What questions do you have for me?” Have some questions prepared that will help you decide whether or not the position is right for you. Be an active interviewer, not just an interviewee. After all, nobody wants to date someone who only talks about themselves.

1. **Plan your outfit**

Plan what you’re wearing ahead of time to eliminate some stress on interview day. You’ve already done your research into the work environment, so you know what to expect. And in many allied health professions, it’s likely scrubs. This should go without saying: Don’t wear scrubs! Business attire is generally safe, and formal is always better. Consider a suit or appropriate business dress that’s not too form-fitting. Keep jewelry and makeup to a minimum to avoid distraction. And make sure to pull out the iron if anything is wrinkled.

1. **Pack your bag**

Prepare everything you need to bring ahead of time so that, like your outfit, it’s one less thing to worry about on the upcoming interview day. Here are some things to consider packing:

* Extra copies of your resume
* A list of references
* Notepad and pen to take notes
* A stain-removing pen (just in case!) or an extra shirt
* Breath mints (just make sure you’ve finished freshening your breath BEFORE the interview so the mint in your mouth is not a distraction)
* A water bottle

1. **Catch some zzz’s**

A good night’s rest is important. According to WebMD, when you don’t get enough sleep, you won’t think as clearly, your emotions might be all over the place, and your work performance can suffer. Strive for eight solid hours and eat an energizing breakfast (rich in protein – LIMIT caffeine & sugar) to ensure your body and mind are at their best.

1. **Plan your commute**

Look up directions and plan to arrive AT LEAST 30 minutes early. A good rule of thumb is to go into the interview 10 minutes early to show your potential employer that you’re punctual. But that extra 10-20 minutes will be a nice buffer for unexpected traffic delays, parking, etc. (If you use an app like Waze to get driving directions, it will factor construction, accidents, and other delays into your commute time.) Plus, arriving plenty early will leave a few extra minutes for No. 10.

1. **Breathe**

Look, interviews are stressful. But keep in mind that it’s felt on both sides. Remember, you are interviewing them as much as they are interviewing you — you both are looking for a good fit. Give yourself a couple of minutes to take a few deep, calming breaths to calm your nervous system. [Try this 5-minute guided meditation](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MR57rug8NsM) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MR57rug8NsM>) before your interview so you’ll be in a calmer state during your appointment.

Good luck! Although if you’ve followed these tips, you’ve already created some of your own.