

Basic Interview Tips

1) Handshake

- a) Firm and friendly
- b) Let interviewer extend hand first
- c) If no hand extended, then acknowledge the introduction without hand and say, "I'm glad to meet you, Dr. X."

2) Good Eye Contact

3) Take your cues from the interviewer

4) Show respect for the interview

5) Be polite and display good manners

- a) Listen carefully and always allow the interviewer to finish speaking before you answer
- b) Do not dispute, refute, or argue with the interviewer's views or feelings.
- c) Do not try to monopolize the interview session. Let the interviewer know that she is in control.

6) 100% Natural

- a) Don't sound like a script. (Do rehearse)
- b) Look thoughtful by pausing for a moment to think through your answer. Don't wait too long, however, because they you may look indecisive.
- c) Express mild surprise or bemusement when asked unusual questions.
- d) Comment, "That's an interesting question," occasionally.
- e) Relax and resist the urge to fill the silence---both you and the interviewer can use the time.
- f) Be honest with interviewer. Lying or embellishing on your experience is a fatal error, one for which you will suffer sooner or later.

7) Develop good rapport

- a) Remember the interviewer's name and use it frequently throughout the interview. For example, say, "That's very interesting, Dr. Jones. Could you tell me more about your research?"
- b) Show interest in what the interviewer talks about and says. Nod and indicated that you are listening and involved in the conversation.
- c) Ask questions, particularly about the areas in which the interviewer has made comments.
- d) Smile when appropriate. This makes you seem warm and helps you to avoid being perceived as aloof or withdrawn.

- e) Laugh when jokes are made. A little laughter will help make you and the interviewer relax and enjoy the interview.
- f) However, heed these words of caution about humor in an interview: Let the jokes be told by others at a job interview. You don't want to be perceived as a clown nor do you want them to judge you on your taste in humorous stories. Off-color jokes are absolutely off-limits, and yet, if you tell a clean joke and your interviewer loves dirty ones, he may decide you're too stiff for the job. Why raise issues like this needlessly?

8) Excel at listening

- a) Try not to anticipate what the speaker will say.
- b) At intervals, try to paraphrase what has been said.
- c) Don't interrupt. Let others finish what they are saying.
- d) Pay attention to body language and other nonverbal signals.
- e) Ask questions if you're confused by something, but don't interrupt for insignificant details.
- f) Express interest by maintaining eye contact.
- g) If appropriate, don't hesitate to make a note or two about something the interviewer is telling you about the job.
- h) You don't want to make extensive notes while being interviewed, but writing down a few points stresses that you think what is being said is important.

9) Express interest in the community

- a) Familiarize yourself with the locality as much as possible (before going).
- b) Use the Internet. Talk with others whom you know about the area.

10) "What are your weaknesses?"

- a) There's no one right answer but some answers are better or non-impressive than others. Over used and clichéd remarks - - - "I'm a perfectionist."
- b) Do take some time to think through what are some of your weaknesses. Your answer should have some basis in reality.
- c) Don't refuse to answer, or indicate that you really can't think of one right now.
- d) That makes you seem uncooperative or pompous and makes the interviewer feel foolish for having asked a question that you refuse to answer.
- e) Don't discuss extremely negative faults.
- f) You needn't confess that you have a tendency to procrastinate, are argumentative, or have difficulty getting along with people!
- g) Discuss a less important and less serious flaw.

- h) Do cast your weaknesses as works in progress. You might mention that you are well aware of your weaknesses; however, you've always been taught to view them as areas in need of improvement.
- i) You could share a success story. This response shows the interviewer that you think about your weaknesses, but that you do not just accept them.

11) Ending the interview

- a) Look for cues that the interview is ending.
- b) "Do you have any questions for me?"
- c) Stand up gradually and gracefully to leave.
- d) Thank the interviewer by name.

12) You are NEVER offstage

- a) From the moment you step on the premises, until you leave, you should be "on." Don't let your guard down until you are away from the faculty and those involved with the interview. Keep interactions positive and upbeat.

Panel Interview / Survival Tips

1. When you sit down, try to find a comfortable position and take a few deep breaths to help you relax.
2. If possible, write down the name and position of each interviewer after you are seated. This will help you remember who is who, and it gives you the information you need to send each member a personal thank-you note. (If you miss a name or spellings are a problem, check with secretary after the interview.)
3. Try to avoid seeming restless or fidgety.
4. Be genuine. You are being scrutinized by many people, and if you are not sincere, it will be obvious to the panel, even more so than during an individual interview.
5. The panel members will normally be well prepared and each interviewer will likely have preplanned questions to ask you.
6. Since each may represent a different specialty or area of interest, this "specialness" among the interviewers will give you the foundation on which to build a rapport with each person in the room. For example, you might give a special nod to those in the room who likely encounter a certain type of situation you're describing to establish a you-know-what-I-mean type of camaraderie.
7. Listen very carefully during the interview. Some interviewers may talk over the other interviewers or even interrupt them.
8. Try to keep a mental note of incoming questions and address each person's query separately.

9. Keep in mind that each person on the panel will have input into the decision process, so it's important to be pleasant and responsive to everyone.
10. When you are asked a question, direct your answer to the person who has posed the question. If you know your answer will be of significance to someone else at the table, you might address them as well. This permits you to target your answer to the appropriate individual, while also being inclusive of others from different departments or disciplines who may also be interested.
11. Give equal attention and consideration to everyone on the panel. Sometimes candidates will focus on people whom they perceive to have more power than others in the room. This tactic is a mistake. In addition, interviewers who are good listeners will provide you with positive feedback (e.g., smiling or nodding their head), which may provide encouragement to you during the interview.
12. Don't be alarmed if you receive hard questions from certain interviewers. If you are asked a demanding or confrontational question, the interviewer has not developed a dislike for you and is probably not trying to trap you. He or she may simply be trying to impress the other people in the room. Just try to answer questions with a calm and logical response, and do not assume that it was a personal attack.

Extra Tips for Interviewing

Indeed, one study of residency programs for physical medicine and rehabilitation (published in the [American Journal of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation](#)) found that displaying compatibility with the program during the interview was the single most important factor in obtaining admission. Here are some results of 15 factors that come up during an interview and their ranking in importance.

Characteristic	Mean Ranking
Compatibility with program	4.4
Ability to articulate thoughts	4.2
Ability to work with the team	4.2
Ability to listen	4.1
Commitment to hard work	4.1
Ability to grow in knowledge	4.1
Maturity	3.9
Ability to solve problems	3.9
Fund of medical knowledge	3.8
Sensitivity to others' psychosocial needs	3.7
Relevant questions asked	3.7
Personal appearance and professionalism	3.6
Level of confidence	3.6
Realistic self-appraisal	3.6
Knowledge of the specialty	3.5