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Decoding the Holiday Dress Code

You're invited to a holiday party and you're looking forward to it until you read two words: **Dress Code**. What follows is too often a mystery. You have no idea what the words mean, and more importantly, what to wear.

Here are some dress codes and how to translate them so you'll look fabulous and make an entrance with confidence and style.

Dressy Casual aka Elegant Casual: A nice shirt/top or sweater (no pictures on it please), well fitting dress pants, a little bit of sparkle for the ladies. No jeans.

Cocktail/Semi Formal: Traditionally different though these days the terms are used interchangeably. Dark suits with white shirts for men, dress for women, showing a little bit of skin, sleeveless OK but not cleavage. If you're attending right after work, wear a jacket over your little black dress, change into strappy sandals, refresh your makeup and carry your essentials in a little clutch.

Black Tie: A tuxedo for men and sparkly dress for women. Definitely go home and change. If that's not an option, go to your gym, shower and change there. Short or long dress? Your choice. There are some wonderful floor length dresses this season

An interesting take on Black Tie is **Creative Black Tie**. A dark suit, white shirt, pale or mid grey regular tie says dressy and sophisticated. Add shimmering accessories to your little black dress such as a shawl, clutch or go all out with a feather boa.

And what if you get it wrong? Take a deep breath, relax, smile and enjoy some holiday cheer.

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