

In some cases, telephone interviews are a way for employers to “pre-screen” possible job candidates before they are granted an in-person interview. In other cases, employers will conduct the full interview over the phone. Whether you are required to go through a pre-screening or have already been given the interview, **you must be more prepared** than you would be for an in-person interview, even if you are allowed to interview in your PJ’s. Below are some tips to keep in mind so your next phone interview is a success.

1. **Use a landline.** You don’t want to risk having problems with cell phone service. It is irritating for employers to conduct interviews if the call breaks up frequently or is dropped completely. If you don’t have a land line at home, just make sure you are in an area with as much cell phone service as possible. Do what you can so the process runs as smooth as possible.
2. **Keep your materials handy.** In fact, lay everything out in front of you. This includes your resume, notes about your career objective (even if it isn’t included in your original cover letter it’s a good idea to have this out depending on the questions you are asked), a pen and pad of paper for note-taking and anything else you think may be helpful during your interview. Because you won’t have to schlep into an office, you can have anything out in front of you to aid with your success.
3. **Steer clear of distractions.** Find a quiet place to interview and stay there! There shouldn’t be any noise in the background to distract you or your potential employer. When you set up your interview appointment, try to schedule it for as precise a time or window. That way, you are able to avoid possible distractions.
4. **Speak slowly and clearly.** When you speak to people face-to-face, you are able to understand what they are saying more clearly because you can see their mouth move. So in a way, you are reading their lips! Neither you nor your potential employer will be able to do this over the phone of course, so speak clearly and a little bit more slowly than you would if you were talking to this person *in person*. If you can’t hear *them*, drop hints that they aren’t speaking clearly or loud enough by politely asking them to repeat themselves. If this makes you uncomfortable at all you can always blame it on your phone: “I’m really sorry, it’s hard to hear you, the volume on my phone just won’t go up!”

5. **Remember – you can’t be seen.** That means that anything you say cannot be interpreted by your body language. Beware of jokes or sarcastic remarks that would have been harmless had he seen your facial expression. Maintain your professionalism; stay on target with the interview topics and focus on the key information about you that will get you hired.
6. **No eating, drinking or chewing gum!** This is self-explanatory. But, we humans are creatures of habit and might pop a potato chip in our mouths at just the wrong moment. However, you should eat beforehand to get your brain going so you can focus.
7. **Prepare questions ahead of time.** Just like in a personal interview, prepare a few questions to ask your potential employer at the end of your phone interview. Some examples are:
 - “What does a typical day look like for an employee with this job?”
 - “What are some skills I would need to develop in order to excel in the position I’m applying for?”
 - “What software/equipment would I be using?”
 - “What is the timeline for making your hiring decision?”

Remember – **do not** ask about salary or benefits until the employer has brought it up.

As long as you are fully prepared and take the necessary precautions, there is no reason why you shouldn’t have a successful phone interview.