

Table etiquette

- The proper time to place your napkin on your lap is after the host or guest of honor.
- If you leave the table before the meal is over, place your napkin to the left of the plate, unfolded.
- The bread plate is to the left of the dinner plate.
- If a person next to you mistakenly uses your bread plate, ask the server or host discreetly for another bread plate.
- When you are finished with your meal, you should place your fork and knife together in the center of your plate, fork tines facing down.
- If you are not sure which fork or knife to use, start with the silverware furthest from your plate and work from the outside in.
- The correct way to eat spaghetti is to twirl it into the base of a spoon with your fork.
- If someone has requested that the salt and pepper shakers be passed, it is not acceptable to use the salt and pepper as it passes by you.

General etiquette

- Open doors for others, and if someone opens a door for you, accept it.
- “Please” and “thank you” are still the magic words they’ve always been. Everyone likes to be appreciated, and “thank you” is the accepted way of showing appreciation. “Please” can turn a demand into a request and indicates an option—it can turn an unpopular request into a more palatable one.
- Send thank-you notes. Write a personal note mentioning your appreciation.
- In making a proper introduction, you should introduce women to men.

E-mail etiquette

- Make the subject line specific. Think of the many messages you’ve received with the generic subject line, “hi” or “just for you.”
- Don’t forward messages with three pages of mail-to information before they get to the content. In the message you forward, delete the extraneous information, such as subject, addresses and date lines.

- When replying to a question, copy only the question into your e-mail, then provide your response. You needn't hit reply automatically, but don't send a bare message that only reads, "Yes." It's too blunt and confuses the reader.
- Address and sign your e-mails. Although this is included in the "to" and "from" sections, remember that you're communicating with a person, not a computer.
- DON'T TYPE IN ALL CAPS. It's too intense, and you appear too lazy to type properly. This is still a written medium. Follow standard writing guidelines as a professional courtesy.

Business etiquette

Make sure your first impression is a good one; the following tips can help you make the best first impression.

Checklist

- Your shoes are clean and/or polished.
- Your clothes are pressed and stain-free.
- Your nails are clean and neat.
- Your hair is neat.
- You have removed all extra jewelry.
- You have the address and phone number of the meeting place.
- You know how to get there and how long it will take. Being on time is critical.
- You know the names of everyone you are meeting and how to pronounce them.
- You have a notebook and pen that works.
- You are prepared for rain, sleet or snow, and your coat is in good condition.

Do the next five things with everyone you meet and you are well on your way to success!

- Look them in the eye.
- Give a firm handshake.
- Greet them—"How do you do?" or "How do you do, Mrs. _____?"
- When saying your name, say it slowly and clearly.
- Smile!

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