

Choose, get, keep



It's about a job: Choose, get, keep

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“Before everything else, getting ready is the secret of success.”

Henry Ford, entrepreneur and founder of Ford Motor Company

So you've accepted the job offer. You're very excited – and a little bit nervous, which is perfectly normal. If you have some spare time before starting the job, use it wisely. Begin familiarising yourself with your new routine.

Ready, steady, go...preparing for your new job

- Set an alarm clock to wake you at the same time you need to get up on work days. Go to bed at a regular time each night. This adjusts your natural 'body clock' to the new timetable.
- Factor in enough time in your morning routine to shower, dress and eat a nourishing, sustaining breakfast. Include foods such as porridge, muesli and fruit in your breakfast.
- Prior to starting your new job you may want to discuss your medical regime with your health practitioner.
- Carry out a few time-trial runs to your new place of work, travelling at the same time and using the same transport (bus, bike etc) that you'll use once you start working.
- Put together a list of the things that you need to take to work, such as snacks, a packed lunch, medication and some small change.
- Plan what you're going to wear to work each day for the first week on the job.
- Make all the necessary arrangements. Do you need new childcare? Does someone need to check on your pets during the day? Make a 'to do' list.
- If you get the chance, practise some of the skills you'll use in your job.
- If you do all or most of the cooking in your household, stock up on a few frozen dinners. In the first few days or weeks on the job you may feel too tired to prepare healthy meals from scratch.
- Write yourself a 'what if...?' plan so that if something goes wrong, you have an action plan to fall back on – ask your Workwise employment consultant to give you the worksheet on how to write this plan.

SIGNING EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENTS (OR CONTRACTS)

Before starting the job, you should receive two copies of a written employment agreement to sign – one copy for you to keep and one copy for the employer to file. It needs to spell out the job's duties, the hours of work, the pay, holiday entitlements and information explaining how the organisation resolves employment disputes. What's more, it needs to detail any special conditions (such as accommodations) you have negotiated. Never sign an agreement on the spot. Always take it home with you to read over for a day or two. Discuss it with someone in your support network. Nothing in the contract should be vague or ambiguous. If something is unclear, the employer needs to reword it before you sign.

Starting the job

Write yourself a 'to do' checklist – use the sample checklist below to start your own list:

THINGS TO GET READY FOR WORK

The day before

- Get clothes, shoes and anything else you need ready for next day
- Make and pack a lunch
- Check any special arrangements (for example, after-school care for children)
- Set alarm clock
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

On a working day

- Pack lunch
- Pack medication and anything else you need to take to work
- Check all electrical appliances are turned off
- Lock doors and windows before leaving
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

FEELING STRESSED?

Everyone feels under pressure when they start a new job. Be extra kind to yourself right now. Take time to relax outside of work doing the things you really enjoy. Exercise is the best stress relief of all. Simply getting out for a walk each day can work wonders. Talk to the people in your support network if things start getting on top of you. Your workplace also has a health and safety representative on staff who can listen to your concerns.

Getting your head around the role

In the first few days or weeks of starting a new job, there are so many new things to take in, your head may feel like it's in a bit of a whirl. Don't worry about that too much. Your boss and your co-workers understand – they've all had to start new jobs themselves in the past.

On the first day, find out what sort of induction (training) the employer has planned for you. Who is responsible for training you? How long will the training last? Is there a 'buddy' system? Will the employer give you some feedback on your progress?

Ask as many questions about the job and the workplace as you need to get your bearings!

Keep a notebook. Write down things you have learned that day (about the job, your co-workers' responsibilities and any other important information). Read over it later. It helps you remember all the new things you're learning each day.

If a co-worker becomes impatient with you, politely remind them that you are new to the job, you are doing your best and you would appreciate their support.

“Take it easy. Avoid late nights. Go to bed at a regular time. Set things up so your friends and family know you need extra support at this time, so that you are not handling this new challenge alone. Plan some social things outside work. Stay in contact with people who reinforce your good points because sometimes people have expectations of you in the workplace that you don't meet and it's easy to get discouraged.”

Anna (36), former registered nurse
and now an early childhood education teacher