

13 THINGS TO DO WHEN YOU CAN'T FIND A JOB

Not being able to find a job is a stressful, horrible position to be in. Whether you are unemployed because you quit, were fired, or laid off, are underemployed and looking to start your career or change career paths, or are a new graduate looking for your first job, there are things you can do when you can't find a job.

1. How Long Have You Been Looking?

An anecdote states: It takes one month of job searching for every \$10,000 of your anticipated salary range. Following this premise, if you are looking to make \$50,000 a year, it should take you 5 months to find a new job.

There are a lot of factors that affect how long your job search will *actually* take, including:

- Your credentials – experience, skills, knowledge, and accomplishments
- The type of job you're applying for
- Where you live
- Who you know or have in your network
- What's happening in the local, national and global economies
- How flexible you are
- How good (or bad) your resume, cover letter and/or application is
- Your references
- The amount of time and effort you put into it

If your job search is taking more time than you anticipated, try not to be too discouraged.

Consider these factors and focus on improving the ones that are within your control.

2. Pay Attention To The Timing

Industries have their own hiring cycles. If you're trying to get into it at the wrong time, you won't have much luck. Schools, for example, typically hire in the summer and start in August or September. Hospitality and tourism jobs are filled in the Spring for the summer, as are construction jobs. Retail and shipping see a surge in hiring in the Fall for the holiday rush.

3. Ask For Help Finding Job Opportunities

Do people in your life know that you are looking for a job? Don't be afraid to ask them for help. The hidden job market is real, meaning there are opportunities out there that are never advertised. Someone you know might be the connection you need. Having a personal reference will also help you stand out from the other candidates.

Use discretion with this point, as you probably don't want this to get back to your employer.

4. Ask For Help With Your Resume & Cover Letter

There are several places you can go to to get help with your resume and cover letter. They can proofread, ensure you use the right keywords and terminology, and help you get your resume past the [6-second glance test](#):

- Family
- Friends and Colleagues (online and offline)
- Network connections
- Career or Employment Centre
- Online - such as [Reddit Resumes](#)

5. Ask For Help With Your Mental Health & Well-Being

If you're struggling with your mental health, please, don't be afraid to ask for help. You don't have to struggle alone. Confide in your partner, friends, or family, or speak with a counselor. There are free and low-cost services available, as well as many resources and supports available online: [Mental Health Resources & Crisis Support](#)

6. Use People

Job searching is not a solo process. It's okay to professionally use people.

- Ask people in your network for help
- Use professional services
- Name-drop if you know the right person or people
- Expand your online network: professional networking sites like LinkedIn, social media
- Expand your offline network: local networking groups

7. Use The Right Keywords

Many job applications are scanned for keywords through an applicant tracking system (ATS). Without them, your resume will not pass this step, and you will not be invited for an interview.

- Use plain language
- Match the terminology used in the job ad and job description
- Do not overstuff keywords

8. Move

If you are willing and able to move, there are numerous opportunities for you.

- Pick a city or area you want to live in and apply for jobs there
- Pick a job you want and apply where that the role is in demand

9. Work Part-Time or Survival Jobs

Having any job is better than having no job at all. You might need to settle for something less than ideal in order to survive, such as a part-time job (or two) or a temporary position. It will help you financially survive and will look better on your resume to not have gaps. They can also lead to new opportunities such as promotions, contract extensions, or full-time job offers.

10. Work Online

Working online is becoming more common, which means your job search doesn't have to be confined by geography. Look for remote jobs, work-from-home jobs, or location-independent jobs.

11. Work For Yourself

With the right skills and the right approach, one way to deal with not being able to find a job is to create your own and work for yourself. This could be a long-term solution or something just for the time being.

There are many different online and offline businesses, side-hustles, and gig jobs that you can try, depending on what you're interested in, how much time you have, and your background. [Here's a list of ideas of jobs you can create for yourself.](#)

12. Learn

It's possible that you can't find a job because you lack the skills or experience needed, or because your skills are out of date. Sorry if that sounds harsh, but it's actually a good thing! It's something you can do something about.

Take a class or two. You can find different training options in the following places:

- College or high school upgrading program
- Adult Education Centers
- Libraries
- Employment Centers
- Online - [Coursera](#), [Edx](#), [Alison](#), [OpenLearn](#), [LinkedIn Learning](#), Youtube

Volunteer. If money is a concern, you could always volunteer, which costs nothing but some of your time. It will give you tangible, hands-on experience that will enhance your resume, your skillset, and your network, while also giving back.

You are also gaining more skills and experience with everything you try, which looks great on a resume!

13. Give Yourself a Break

"If you're unemployed, your full-time job is to find a job."

Yes, finding a job is your top priority - but be realistic. It's okay if you don't spend 40 hours a week job searching. You have other obligations and are of course allowed to enjoy your life!