

Career-Changing Tips

Maybe you're ready for a new challenge. Maybe you would like to make more money. Either way, changing careers is normal, and this advice can help you be successful no matter what career you choose:

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Determine If a Career Change Is Right for You

Before you change careers, some soul searching is in order. You have to think about what you like and don't like about your current job. For example, if your biggest problem at your current place of work is a temperamental boss, perhaps the solution is a new job in the same career field rather than a brand-new career.

Remember: Don't dismiss a career change just because of your age. A younger person might think he or she should spend several years in the same career before making a change. An older person might not want to take the risk that a career change may require. What's important, however, is whether or not your career is making the most of your talents.

Figure Out Which Career You Want

If you know you don't like the career you have but you aren't sure what to try next, make a list of the type of work that makes you happy. Take note of job factors that appeal to you, such as working outside, flexible hours or interaction with people. Next, take that list to your friends and family. Sometimes, an outside perspective can yield insights you never expected. You can also try our myPathway tool, which can help you get a head start on choosing a new career path:

[myPathway](#)

Another way to choose a career is to take a career questionnaire or test. These questionnaires are designed to help you determine which careers are a good match for your skills and your personality. For example, the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is designed to help individuals measure their abilities and discover their interests, whether they are planning on joining the Military, going to school or finding a new career.

Sites:

www.careerpath.com

www.todaysmilitary.com/before-serving/asvab-test

Prepare Your Finances for a Career Change

Changing careers calls for an investment of time and money. Instead of quitting right away, calculate how much time and money you think you will need for training and living expenses while you're trying to break into your new career. If you think you might need to relocate, start saving for that as well. By setting aside money, you can reduce potential stress and focus on finding a career that excites you. These resources can help you get a ballpark figure for what you'll need:

[Emergency Fund Worksheet](#)

[Moving Cost Calculator](#)

[Cost of Living Calculator](#)

Train for Your New Career

You'll need to set aside some time to gather the training and experience that will attract a potential employer within your new career field. The first step is to figure out how much training you need. For example, you may need to study a new language or learn some new computer skills. Buying some books or enrolling in a continuing-education class may be all it takes to get going.

In some cases, you may need to enter a degree program to get the training you need. The following resources can help you decide which program is a good fit for your goals and can help you start planning:

[Search for four-year colleges](#)

[Search for two-year colleges or trade schools](#)

[Returning Students College Planning Timeline](#)

You may also want to think about joining the Military as a way to train for a new career. The Military provides multiple educational and training opportunities, such as certification programs. Through military service, you can also take advantage of tuition support programs and the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

[Learn more about college assistance through the Military](#)

[More on the Post-9/11 GI Bill](#)

Break into Your New Career Field

Once you've planned and trained, it's time to find a job in your new career. Create a résumé that highlights your training and experiences in your new field, and don't forget to start networking. Make a set of business cards, let your friends know that you're looking for a new job and consider joining a professional association in your new field so you can learn more from your peers.

[Résumé Builder](#)

[Checklist: Building a Career Network](#)