

Quitting a Job Without a Plan? Read This First!

If you're unhappy at work, it may be tempting to head for the nearest exit immediately. However, leaving before you have something else lined up could have major consequences for your wellbeing and for your career.

The truth is that quitting your job without a backup plan may be reasonable or reckless depending on the specific circumstances. Find out what you need to know about this important decision before you hand in your resignation letter.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE QUITTING IMMEDIATELY

Does your job involve physical hazards or such intense stress that it's undermining your health? Is it so demanding that you're unable to look for other opportunities as long as you're in your current position? If so, you may need to depart now regardless of whether you have another job waiting.

USE THESE STRATEGIES IF YOU'RE QUITTING RIGHT AWAY:

1. **Exit gracefully.** Just because you're leaving quickly doesn't mean you can forget your manners. If possible, tell your manager before you put anything in writing. Be sure to express your appreciation for your time with the company.
2. **Revise your budget.** Reduce financial pressures by calculating a monthly budget based on minimal expenses. **Think about how you can supplement your income**

with part time jobs or freelancing.

3. **Review your network.** Start letting others know that you're looking for a new position. Challenge yourself to make a specific number of contacts each day.
4. **Stay busy.** The gig economy has made employment gaps less problematic, but you may still need to explain them to some employers and recruitment companies. Work out how you'll describe this time on your CV. As a bonus, activities like consulting and volunteer work will help you to stay engaged.
5. **Refresh and recharge.** It can be difficult to make a positive impression in interviews if your old job has left you depressed or anxious. **Reach out to family, friends, and your spiritual community to boost your mood and self-esteem.**
6. **Be flexible.** Take time to reflect on why you left your old job. What specifically was the issue? What did you like? What didn't you like? You may want to explore another industry or transfer your skills to a different set of responsibilities. Take it as an opportunity to change direction a little if need be.
7. **Order business cards.** You'll look more professional and strategic if you hand out updated business cards rather than trying to cross out your old office information. There are many sites where you can order affordable and high-quality printing.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE BIDDING YOUR TIME

Maybe your job is less than fulfilling, but it's still tolerable. Maybe it even provides a path for advancement if you're patient. **Looking for a job while you still have an income can increase your options and decrease your stress.**

THESE STRATEGIES WILL BENEFIT YOU IF YOU HAVE SOME TIME BEFORE YOU QUIT:

1. **Address obstacles.** If your job is satisfying except for certain aspects, you may be able to fix them. For example, being proactive about setting priorities could help you deal with a demanding manager.
2. **Ask for support.** Talk with your manager and HR department if you think they would be willing to assist you. Maybe you could modify your job description or transfer to a different department.
3. **Warm up your network.** Catch up with old contacts and look for ways to help them. It's less awkward than getting back in touch because you need job leads right away.
4. **Add to your savings.** Put a percentage of each pay packet into your savings consistently. Having a financial cushion will allow you to take the time you need to find a position that suits your career goals.

Giving up your job without a safety net can be frightening, but sometimes it's your smartest option. There are practical advantages to searching for a new position while you're still employed. However, letting go of a job that's holding you back may inspire you to pursue your dreams instead of settling for something less.