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THE ULTIMATE FIRST JOB TOOLKIT

Your first job is a big deal. Whether you're starting an apprenticeship, internship, placement or graduate scheme, it's the beginning of your career.

It's an exciting time, but we also know that your first job also means a whole bunch of nerves. We're here to help you clear those right on up and get you feeling comfortable.

INSIDE...

You'll find everything you need to **start your role with confidence**. From pre-prepping and building great habits to forming work relationships and making the most of your work experience.



BEFORE YOUR FIRST DAY

A bit of prep goes a long way. Showing up ready to go on your first day will help set you up as you mean to go on.

ONE WEEK BEFORE

DO YOUR RESEARCH

You don't need to know everything, but it's always a good idea to refresh yourself with the basics.

- Check out the company website, social media and any news
- Re-read the job description so you're clear on what's expected
- Think of a few questions to ask on your first day and write them down.

ANY PRE-FIRST DAY QUESTIONS?

You'll be sent information about your first day, outlining everything you need and any logistical bits, like office entry codes or where to pick up your entry card. Got questions? Get in touch with your employer.

ONE DAY BEFORE

PACK YOUR BAG

If you're office-based, make sure you pack anything you'll need (like ID and any other documents).

PLAN YOUR JOURNEY

Know how you're getting there and the time you need to leave to arrive early.

MAKE SURE YOUR TECH WORKS

If you're working from home, you'll be sent a laptop and any other home office bits. Make sure the laptop and charger work and that you're fully connected to the internet.

LOOK THE PART

Dress to match the company vibe. Working for a start-up? Wear something smart/casual. One of the Magic Circle law firms? Dress smartly. If in doubt, you can always ask or go smart.

Ready for your first day?

Find out how to ace your first day next

NAILING YOUR FIRST DAY

Here's how to make an impression without putting too much pressure on yourself.

ARRIVE EARLY

Your employer will let you know what time you'll start on your first day. Aim to arrive around 10 to 15 minutes before your start time.

GET ORGANISED

Your first day is usually quieter, get familiar with your email inbox and any programmes you need to use daily, like Slack, Google Drive or OneDrive.

SAY HELLO

You'll meet a lot of new people, say hello and introduce yourself.

ASK QUESTIONS

Don't be afraid to ask if you're unsure about anything. It shows genuine interest and a willingness to learn. Here's some you can start with:

"What do you expect from me in the first month?"

"How do people prefer to communicate?"

"How often will I have check-ins and catch-ups?"

"What will I be doing in my first week?"

Read more on everything you need to know:

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YOUR ULTIMATE FIRST DAY CHECKLIST

A bit of prep goes a long way. Showing up ready to go on your first day will help set you up as you mean to go on.

THE NIGHT BEFORE, WHAT TO PACK

- ID/Passport (you might need it for paperwork)
- Bank details for payroll
- Any documents your work asks for
- Notebook and pen
- Headphones for the commute
- A water bottle (and maybe a couple of snacks)
- Travel card/Oyster card/money for travel
- Phone charger
- Lunch (just in case you're not sure what's in the area)

THE NIGHT BEFORE, OTHER THINGS TO DO

- Set two alarms (just in case)
- Pick an outfit
- Double-check your first day email

ON THE DAY

- Check your journey (in case of delays)
- Have breakfast
- Remember who to ask for when you arrive

WORKING FROM HOME ON DAY ONE?

- Test your laptop, camera, mic and internet connection the night before
- If you know what programmes you need to install, make sure you have them (loads of companies do this during onboarding on the day!)
- Know who to contact if things aren't working
- Find a quiet, tidy space to set up
- Dress comfortably (but appropriately)
- Log on a few minutes early
- Have a notebook and pen nearby

THE UNWRITTEN RULES

Workplace etiquette isn't about being perfect. It's all about how you behave at work and being someone your colleagues enjoy working with. Here are some things to think about during your work hours.

COMMUNICATE APPROPRIATELY

How you talk to people really matters, and different situations call for different styles:

- Need a quick question answered? Drop a Slack or Teams message
- Need to give feedback or relay something sensitive? Book a face-to-face call
- Formal updates should be sent in an email
- Respect people's time. Don't take days to respond to messages

RESPECT THE OFFICE

Make sure you're treating all shared spaces nicely:

- Keep your desk tidy
- Keep the noise down, use headphones and find a quiet place for meetings
- Don't borrow things without asking (even if you have a really well-stocked stationery cupboard, double-check first) and put things back
- Bringing a packed lunch? (Wow, organised!) Try not to bring anything with strong smells

BE PRESENT

You can have your phone with you (unless you're working with data), but make sure you're not on your phone for long periods of time. Eating lunch with colleagues? Put the phone away; listening builds relationships.

LEARN THE CULTURE

Take a few weeks to understand how things work in the office. Listen to general office conversations and the types of topics people talk about.

SHOUT PEOPLE OUT

Got help on something? Let people know. It'll go down really well and make you a trustworthy team member.

HOW TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK

Work is so much better when you get on with your colleagues. While it's important to network, don't see building work relationships as transactional. Here's how.

BE CURIOUS

Ask people about their role, what they've been working on and how long they've been there. Conversations will develop from there. Even if they don't, at least you've broken the ice.

KNOW YOUR BOUNDARIES (AND BE RESPECTFUL)

You don't have to share everything, and you can still be friendly without being an open book. The same goes the other way. Don't push. Everyone has a different comfort level, especially at work.

FIND YOUR PEOPLE

You don't need to be besties with everyone. Find one or two people you connect with and work on those relationships. It can take time, but it's worth it.

BE RELIABLE

Don't overstretch or overpromise. Reply when people need something from you. Be appreciative and helpful. Trust is a really great way to build lasting work relationships.

INTROVERTED? WE'VE GOT YOU

- It's okay to take a few minutes to recharge. Offices can be overwhelming
- Tell your manager how you work best. It'll go a long way in helping you feel comfortable
- Write down your small wins

GETTING SH*T DONE

You'll start working on projects (sometimes a few at once). Managing your workload and time is a super important skill to have. Here's how to build them.

KNOW YOUR PRIORITIES

Some tasks are very important. Some can wait. It's always useful to ask which ones need to be done ASAP. It'll help you organise your time.

BREAK THINGS DOWN

Big projects are a lot less scary when you split them into smaller tasks. List everything that needs to be done (in order of importance), then take it one step at a time.

ASK FOR HELP

Don't sit on an issue for too long; it can get much bigger, really quickly. If you're really finding it hard, ask for some help.

FEELING OVERWHELMED?

LET SOMEONE KNOW

If your workload feels unmanageable, talk to your manager. They'll help you find ways to structure your tasks.:

HIGHERIN'S TOP TIPS

Here's some quick wins to help you stay on top of things:

- Start each day with a tasklist, putting high priority tasks first
- Set your own deadlines earlier so you have some time to fix anything
- At the end of the week, write down what went well and what you can improve
- Find a system that works for you: a notepad, apps like Notion or a spreadsheet



LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Starting a new job is a lot. Even if you're having the best time, getting used to the world of work can be tiring. Here's how to make sure you're looking after yourself while on the job.

GIVE YOURSELF A CHANCE TO CATCH UP

It's your first job! You're not going to get it all in one go (and no one is expecting you to). It'll take a few weeks to settle in fully. Take everything as it comes.

CREATE A ROUTINE

Winging it might work for some, but eventually you'll burn out. Build a daily routine that works. Take a walk before you start, have breakfast or listen to music.

CLOCK OUT WHEN YOU'RE DONE

Finished your office hours? Close the laptop, put it away and enjoy your evening. Any emails or final bits can be done in the morning.

CELEBRATE YOUR WINS

Had to speak in a meeting? Finished a pretty huge task? Presented in front of managers? They're all amazing milestones. Keep track of them. They're all great ways that show how much you're actually learning.

TAKE YOUR HOLIDAY

If you're on a grad scheme/job, placement or internship, you'll be entitled to paid holiday. Take those days off! Whether it's a random Wednesday or a week on the beach, time off is so important.

READY TO START YOUR **FIRST JOB?**

Remember, you actually got the job. Now it's time to make it count.
We have loads more working life content. Click below for more.

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