

MONEY & CAREER

9 GREAT TECH TIPS FOR PEOPLE RETURNING TO WORK

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If you've been away from the work force for a while, there are some valuable technology tips to consider as you **search for your next job**. Online career resources along with some simple steps can help you sort quickly through massive amounts of information as you juggle family responsibilities. Tapping into different technology options means that you'll be able to explore thousands of jobs, **network with hundreds of people** and share your qualifications with dozens of prospective employers all from the comfort of your own home.

So where do you begin? How can you get in touch with your inner geek, and what if you can't find your inner geek?

Here's how to use technology to help you return to the work world.

1. Learn at your own pace

Think baby steps. While it's beneficial to integrate technology into your search strategy, you may feel initially unnerved or overwhelmed. There's no need to fear. Set a comfortable pace to learn what's available, decide what's going to serve you best, and then give yourself permission to learn the technology gradually.



Consider what "live" support you'll need to embrace the various technology options. You may want to turn to a tech-savvy friend, neighbour or family member who can lend a hand.

3. Practice setting up online accounts

Fake it until you can make it. If you're feeling a bit shaky about how some sites work, establish a temporary e-mail account with an anonymous name and practice setting up accounts, creating profiles and searching different websites. Once you're comfortable using the technology, deactivate your practice accounts and create real ones to help you network, search and triumphantly land a job.

4. Online job search

Practice searching online for jobs at sites like Workopolis and CareerAIM. It's a great way to see **which jobs are in demand**, discover what's required for the roles that interest you, and then determine which ones you want to pursue.

5. Look at networking sites

Create an account on a networking site like LinkedIn and start building your profile. You can include your work experience, education and more information to let people know what makes you a great candidate. Plus, you can use the site to identify and **connect with friends** and former colleagues to let them know that you're ready, willing and able to return to work.

6. Conduct some research

Visit different company sites and/or **Facebook** pages to help determine the organizations where you'd like to be employed. Then search Facebook or LinkedIn to find friends or contacts who work at those companies. They may know about current or upcoming

opportunities or even help you score a **job interview**.

7. Brush up on your strengths and job skills

There are lots of free, online quizzes that can help provide you with general information on your personality and your skills. Just remember to view these results as a guideline, rather than the gospel, since they are designed for a broad audience and won't address your specific situation and needs.

8. Prepare two versions of your resume

Many companies are moving towards only accepting online applications and the requirements vary amongst organizations. Create a fully-formatted version that includes your choice of fonts, which can be uploaded as an attachment. In addition, produce a plain, text-only version for sites that want you to cut and paste specific parts, or your entire resume, into their online application form.

9. Create a professional e-mail

Set up a professional e-mail address to submit your cover letter and **resume**. While bobandsheila@somemailserver.com demonstrates your passion for your family, an address with your first initial or first name and last name, such as jdoe@anymailserver.com, is more appropriate when communicating with potential employers.

Finally, good luck and have fun with the technology. The **possibilities for finding work** are just a click away.

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