

## Don't Hit The Panic Button

**While you are employed**

When times are good is the best time to prepare for when they are not.  
 Planning ahead is usually profitable; look over these tips on being prepared for the possibility of a lay-off.

- Don't Get Caught on Empty
- Diagnose Your Financial Health or Your Financial Health Checklist
- Recession proof jobs
- Make Yourself Indispensable
- Progress chart
- Long-term & Short-Term Budget Survival
- Smart Budget Tips

**When you are unemployed**

Your employment situation may not be looking good, or possibly it has ended.  
 Here are some initial steps to begin getting control of both the situation and of yourself.  
 Start at the beginning and assess the situation.

- When The Ax Falls
- Suddenly Unemployed
- Common Mistakes Job Seekers Make
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# Don't Get Caught on Empty

Posted By: [businessworkforce.com](http://businessworkforce.com)

<http://www.businessworkforce.com/career-resources/continuing-education/career-magazine-resources.htm>

Did you ever notice that there are certain people who have great jobs? People who are always working on a consistent basis, even in shaky industries and uncertain times? And then there are those who are either constantly unhappy in their careers or who go for long periods of time without work. They blame the world and wonder why bad luck always seems to happen to them.

You make your own luck. Your career is great when you focus on making it great. This means not waiting for things to happen, but making things happen instead. It means being proactive instead of reactive. Rather than blaming others, you are passionate about new possibilities. You are excited about what you do and what you contribute every day.

So, how do you make sure you are never without a job? Follow these five steps:

## 1 Tell Yourself That You Will Always Be Employed

What you say matters. Your words have power, meaning, and intention. When you tell yourself something bad will happen to your job, something bad will probably happen. If you tell yourself that you are marketable and confident and that you will always be working, your words can make this true.

## 2 Anticipate Trends in Your Industry

If your job is being eliminated or outsourced, you will want to know about it before you are in the room with the human resources person telling you that your job is going away. Research your industry. Know what's happening and what the experts say will happen. This way you can make informed decisions. Look for trends. When you find them, start to train yourself in these areas. Knowledge is power. Having the right skills at the right time ensures that no matter what is happening around you, you will be needed and employable.

## 3 Have An Updated Résumé

Your résumé showcases your skills and abilities to the world. It is a selling tool that outlines your unique qualifications so an employer can see, at a glance, how you can contribute to the employer's workplace. When you are looking for work, prospective employers know immediately whether or not you are a fit for a position. Even if you are not looking for work, your résumé reminds you of the contributions you make on a regular basis, something you can easily forget when you are immersed in the day-to-day. Whether you are looking for a job, or you already have one, an updated résumé is essential for your career.

## 4 Network On A Regular Basis

If you start to network only when you need something, you will have a lot of catching up to do. Therefore, network every day. Wherever there are people, there is an opportunity to network. You do not always have to go somewhere to network successfully. You can network within your own company. Are there opportunities for you? Ask people and find out. People are your best resource for information. Invite co-workers to lunch. Take the time to walk by someone's office to say hello.

In addition, who can you tap into outside of where you work? Every industry has an association. When is your industry's association meeting in your area? Check the date and go. Get involved in this group so more people can get to know you. That way, if something happens to your job, you'll have people to reach out to. Lastly, send an e-mail to or call people you already know on a regular basis. If you are always keeping in touch, then you will not feel bad that you are bothering someone when it's time to reach out and ask for help.

## Your Financial Health Checklist

Selections from: <http://www.wealthinformatics.com/2011/01/01/diagnose-your-financial-health-do-an-annual-wealth-checkup/>

Financial resolutions can be made at any time of year. Before making a resolution like, “I will spend less next year”, we need to know the problem areas. Success comes from knowing what needs to be fixed and what the plan of attack is. See how we did last year and collect data for proper goals. Here is a list you can do now:

**Retirement:** Do you know how much you need to retire? Now would be a good time to talk with your spouse, discuss the lifestyle you want in retirement and calculate. With the number, check if you are saving enough for retirement. Can you increase your contribution? Try upping your contribution by 1-2% until it starts hurting.

**Emergency Fund:** It is highly recommended to save 3 months to 6 months expenses in liquid savings for a rainy day. If you are self employed or in a position where it is difficult to find another job, experts recommend up to one year living expenses as an emergency fund. Even if you are paying down debt, \$1000 or even one month’s living expenses, to avoid going into further debt.

**Talk finances:** If you are married TALK. It will be difficult to get ahead if your goals/beliefs don’t align.

**Spending:** Are you spending less than you earn? Do you know where your money goes? Using an automated service like Mint, Yodlee or Thrive is an easy way of doing this. You can always track your expenses with Excel or with just a notebook. If are not comfortable with Excel you could try software like Quicken.

**Insurance:** This is an area a lot of us ignore. Health, home owners, renters, auto, disability, life and long term care insurance – Do you have enough coverage and is it applicable? If an insurance product is applicable to you and you don’t have enough coverage, do you have the money set aside to self-insure? If you already have enough insurance, consider evaluating the cost and amounts of home owners’ and auto insurance annually; also review the home inventory annually.

**Diversify:** Do your investments match your retirement goals? Are you near your retirement but won’t be able to retire if the stock market goes down? Does your

portfolio require annual balancing?

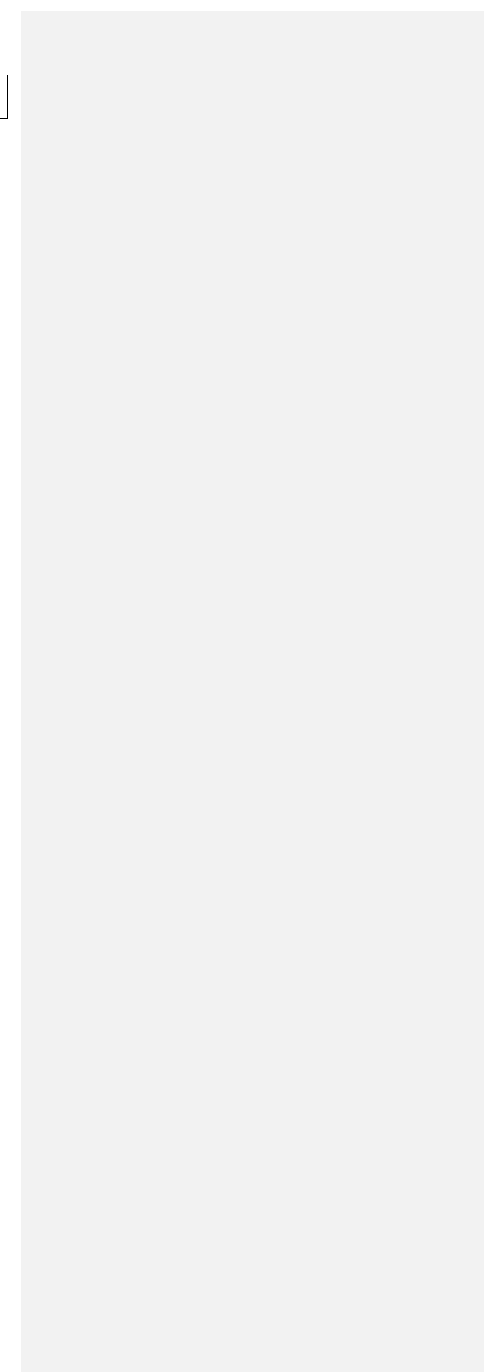
**Estate Planning:** If your will/trust is more than a few years old, review them and make sure they are accurate. Is your beneficiary information up to date? Do you have a health care directive/medical power of attorney? Maybe you have an emergency financial file that you need to review? Does your spouse know all the places you have accounts, where your safe deposit box and estate planning documents are?

**Credit:** Starting from renting a house, connecting utilities to buying a car or a house, everything is based on credit now. It is extremely important to keep our credit pristine to get a competitive mortgage or a loan. Have you checked your credit report? Credit score? Do you know if are accurate? It is a good practice to check all your credit reports (TransUnion, Equifax & Experian) once a year. You can check all the reports free at the same time or request one report from each bureau every 4 months. You can get your credit scores for free as well. If you have a low credit score, develop a plan to improve your credit – maybe by accelerating your debt payments or fixing any errors.

**Debt:** Do you have any consumer debt? Do have a plan to pay it all off? What is your debt to income ratio? By retirement time, it is ideal to have zero debt/liabilities.

**Net Worth:** Net worth is not the only way to determine your wealth; there are other measures as well. But net worth is one of the easiest and most intuitive. It can give you a quick and clear idea of what you own, what you owe and generally how you are doing. Do you know your net worth? Simply put, net worth = value of your assets, minus – value of your liabilities. Calculating the value of certain things can be a bit difficult, like valuing a house – it fluctuates a lot. But more than the raw number, we are interested in seeing if our net worth is improving every year. So getting an approximate value using Zillow or any other valuation tool will work. You can include the mortgage in the liabilities. If your net worth decreased this year, do you have an explanation for that and have a plan to improve it?

**Outlook about life:** It is more important to be happy than to be rich. Ask yourself what you want to change in your life; then change it.



## Recession Proof Jobs

By Kristina Cowan December 17, 2007  
<http://blogs.payscale.com/content/2007/12/recession-proof.html>

In the wake of the housing crisis, news abounds of a looming recession, with regular reports of financial gloom. It's no wonder workers are fretting over finances and the employment outlook for the coming months, as a recent Hudson Employment Index shows.

Workers shouldn't worry, experts say. Jobs in some industries do have good potential for weathering a financial storm. It's more important, though, for employees to focus on making themselves recession proof

### **Best Businesses During a Recession**

Even during boom times no job is fail-safe. But some industries are safer havens than others, experts say, such as healthcare, the federal government, clean technology, information technology, and sales and marketing.

"I think the recession proof jobs are where people need the goods and services regardless, like healthcare and pharmaceuticals. People are getting older, people are getting frailer, and demographics of the population are aging. Biosciences, physical therapy, occupational therapy-those are jobs that are as recession proof as they come. They also require specialized skills," says Jon Bender, managing partner with PrincetonOne, a New Jersey-based recruiting firm.

Sales and marketing positions and others supporting them are fairly sturdy, according to Kevin Donlin, author and creator of The Simple Job Search system. Anyone who makes or saves money for a company will be relatively safe, he says.

### **Federal government jobs also may be worth considering.**

"Uncle Sam hires approximately 2 percent of America's total workforce and the pay and benefits are outstanding. Few feds lose their jobs during a recession and most downsizing in the federal government is based on attrition, not filling vacant positions, rather than letting people go. I know firsthand; from 1969 through January of 2005, I worked for Uncle Sam and went through a number of recessions and

agency reorganizations during that time," says author and retired federal employee Dennis V. Damp.

With baby boomers leaving government jobs, there are many opportunities to land these positions, Damp says, noting the best time to act is before a recession.

### **Surviving a Recession - What to Do if a Recession Hits**

During a recession isn't the best time to take charge of your work life and make drastic decisions, experts agree

Marc Karasu, a career coach and former vice president of advertising and marketing at Yahoo! HotJobs, says workers should concentrate on their current job and highlight how they've exceeded expectations.

"Self-promotion is a fine thing, and there's nothing wrong with letting your superiors know in a professional and intelligent way that you're adding value. If you can, start demonstrating the value you add to a company through your annual performance review," Karasu says. "Also, meet with your boss and say where you are doing good, where you can improve. Bosses like to see people come to them proactively. The key is to do it today before a recession, so you don't look desperate."

Career expert Les McKeown says it's more difficult to identify recession proof jobs or industries than it was 15 years ago, so workers trying to build a career must establish their own individual security.

To do that, McKeown says, they must prove that it would cost their employer more to let them go than it would cost to keep them. Ultimately the employee is seen as someone who would flourish no matter where in the company he or she lands.

"At the end of the day the only way to make yourself recession proof is to make your opportunity cost as high as possible. [You want employers to] say, 'We can't let Jane go because we can put her anywhere,'" McKeown explains. "You must have a personal ability to add value. If you can do that, then you're as recession proof as anyone."

## Make Yourself Indispensable

Posted By: By Bridget Quigg

<http://blogs.payscale.com/content/2009/03/five-ways-to-keep-a-job-during-a-recession.htm>

Who among us hasn't seen a helpful, smart, hard-working person get laid off? Being let go is not for last place performers anymore. Everyone is at risk. Can you avoid the pink slip? You can sure try. Here are five ways to keep your job during a recession and improve your job performance.

### **1 Talk directly to your manager about improving performance**

Lay it on the table and sincerely ask for advice from your boss about your situation. You're not asking for a butter up or paint a rosy picture. You're asking for the truth.

Ron Mitchell, career coach, advises on some good questions to ask your boss regarding job performance, "You should take control of this process. In this meeting you should ask two questions. First, what can I improve upon? Second, what additional things can I do to help you do your job better?"

Is asking your boss about performance considered kissing up? Maybe but your manager is under a lot of stress, too; finding ways to help them and make them look better makes you less likely to be let go.

### **2 Learn other people's jobs**

It sounds calculating, but it's true. One of the best ways to keep your job during a recession is to increase your value to your employer. If you can do the work of two, you have a better chance of out-staying your peers. As with any worthwhile fitness program, you must cross-train for greater strength and resiliency. Sean Ebner, regional vice president of the IT outplacement firm, emphasizes why this productivity makes a difference, saying, "Make it so that two people would have to replace your work effort, not just half of a person."

Once you pick up new job skills or strengthen old ones, let people know. Executive coach Peggy Klaus says, "Connect the dots for people and show them how your strengths can be utilized in other departments, capacities, or fields."

### **3 Be profitable**

If you're not clear how your work makes or costs the company money,- or both -

you'd be wise to figure that out soon. If you need help, talk to trusted friends, co-workers and even your boss. Letting your boss know that you're trying to improve your performance and contribute to the bottom line can't hurt. Plus, it reminds them of how essential you are.

Klaus says, "Be certain that the results you are focusing on and producing are the ones your boss and company value most. Translation: efficiency, cost-cutting and revenue."

### **4 Toot your own horn - loudly!**

No one likes arrogance, but staying quiet about your job performance and contributions isn't wise. Whatever you do to move the company forward - stay late to complete a project, have a great call with a client, train someone in a new skill or improve your output - make sure your boss knows about it. Your resourcefulness and willingness to work hard are attributes most managers want to keep in-house.

### **5 Rise up and take command**

Amidst the devastation that layoffs leave behind, you have a unique opportunity to collect the remaining pieces and move quickly into management. As Allison Hemming, founder of The Hired Guns agency says, "This could be your opportunity to rise to the top." She recommends when departments are combined, "Take advantage of a re-shuffled deck. Management is looking for new leaders to prevail."

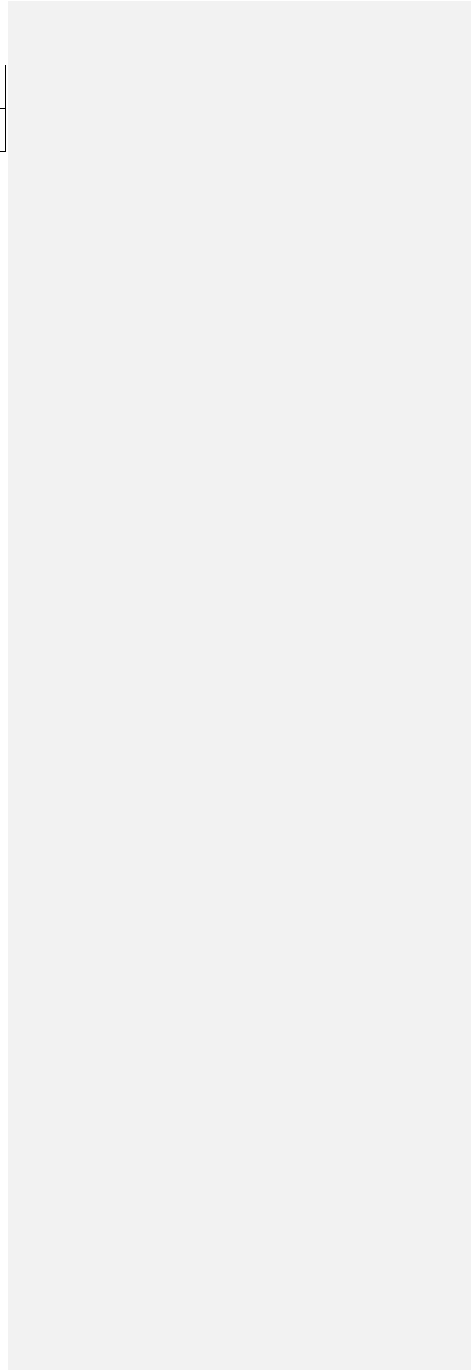
When the company is back on its feet, you'll be a tested veteran who helped lead through the worst of times. Your job could be more secure and well-paid than ever.

### **Are Some Layoffs Simply Inevitable?**

Many experts agree that you can only do so much to protect yourself from a layoff. Sometimes, even your best won't be enough.

So stand proud should that moment come. One thing this current job environment teaches us is that no one is immune to layoffs. Companies have for the past few rounds of layoffs been cutting bone not fat. They are laying off people that have been doing a good job.

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## Long-term & Short-Term Budgeting Survival

By: Janice Stringham LeFevre  
Ensign, Mar. 1998, p72

Review your financial situation and assess the impact a loss of income will have on your ability to weather six months to a year of ongoing expenses. Budgeting under such pressure is not pleasant if it is not part of your normal family routine but it is necessary. Consider the following article from the Ensign.

As we set up our budget, one of our challenges was determining a figure for each item on our spreadsheet. This was because we each had differing views on how our income should be spent or saved. Budgeting required open and honest communication with one another to work out our differences. We quickly discovered that each of us had to stay within the parameters we had set or the budget was useless. Initially this seemed confining, but once we committed ourselves fully, we began to feel some of the freedom budgeting brings, including peace of mind. Budgeting helped us gain control over our money, eliminate impulse buying, and put aside money for future needs.

As part of our budget, we set up two savings accounts: our longterm and our short-term savings. Our long-term savings account consists of future reserves. Currently

our goal is to have a six-month supply of money in the bank and to consistently save money for our children's missions, education, and marriages.

Our short-term savings account is divided into such categories as insurance, taxes, car maintenance, home improvements, gifts and Christmas, clothing, and food storage. We budget a specific amount each pay period for each category, allowing the balances to build up over time. Then when we need money for one of those expenses, it is already there. Another benefit that comes from having the money set aside is that we can buy items such as gifts, clothing, and food storage when they are on sale without compromising our budget or turning to credit cards.

Our short-term savings plan also enables us to save for large purchases. Saving for these purchases assists us to buy without going into debt and incurring large interest charges.

My husband and I frequently feel the guidance of the Spirit in planning our budget and in working through our financial challenges. Besides being a vehicle to help us manage our money, budgeting together has strengthened our marriage and opened the door to many other unforeseen blessings.

## Smart Budget Tips

By Kimberly Palmer US News and World Report

<http://money.usnews.com/money/personal-finance/slideshows/10-smart-ways-to-improve-your-budget>

### Decide on your priorities.

Most people's budgets revolve around three costs: food, housing, and transportation. After you budget for those expenses, which probably account for between half to two-thirds of your take-home pay, and factor in any debt payments, decide how to prioritize savings, household expenses, professional expenses, and entertainment.

### Harness the power of a Web tool.

On [Mint.com](http://Mint.com), you can upload your account information and get immediate insight into where your money is going. You can then use that information to start saving more money, just in time for back-to-school season. Other online options include [Wesabe.com](http://Wesabe.com), Pennyfinder, and You Need a Budget.

### Time yourself.

Once you decide you need to buy a specific item—a new computer, for example, or a backpack—give yourself a specific time limit to make the purchase, such as a half-hour. You don't want to lose precious time sifting through options when your instinctive reaction will probably end up being the best decision.

### Consider the year, not just the month.

Budgeting for the year is better largely because we feel less confident in our monthly estimates, so add more of a buffer for unexpected expenses, according to research by University of Southern California's Gulden Ulkumen, Cornell's Manoj Thomas, and New York University's Vicki Morwitz.

### Set money aside for leisure.

Research shows that people get the most pleasure out of spending on leisure activities, such as vacations, movie theater tickets, and hobbies, partly because these things usually involve spending time with other people. Don't forget to reserve some cash for such happiness-inducing pleasures.

### Consider your high and low points.

A quick review of where you went wrong—and right—over the past few months will help pinpoint your weaknesses. Did you end up spending twice as much as usual on plane tickets because you waited too long to buy them? Or did you buy overly expensive gifts? Don't just beat yourself up; consider the good decisions you made, too, whether it was comparing prices before buying a new television or cooking more homemade meals.

### Take the spending diary challenge.

Write down every single thing you spend money on for two weeks, along with notes on why and how it made you feel. You might be surprised to discover the real leaks in your budget. Instead of lunches out and cab rides, you might be wasting money on coffee and happy hours. After the two weeks is up, review the list and see what jumps out at you.

### Avoid temptation.

If you were on a diet, would you stare at chocolate chip cookies all day? Of course not. So why do we torture ourselves by allowing catalogues full of shiny, new kitchen gadgets or tempting electronics to come through our mails slot every day? Cancel them.

### Reward yourself.

Diets that force people to expunge almost everything tasty from their meals never seem to have much success. That principle applies to money, too. Denying ourselves every material pleasure turns money into a sad subject, instead of an empowering one. After all, you work hard for your money, so it should bring you some pleasure.

### Share your budgeting goals with others.

Whether you want to stop wasting money on unnecessary shopping trips or pay off your credit card debt, share those goals with friends and perhaps even strangers. Websites such as [43things.com](http://43things.com) and [MyLifeList.org](http://MyLifeList.org) makes it easy to share goals with similarly-minded people.



# When the Ax Falls

By Anna Prior 22 Feb 2009  
Excerpt : The Wall Street Journal Possibility of Lay Off

## What's the worst that can happen?

We put that question to the expert -- Joshua Piven, author of the bestselling "Worst-Case Scenario Survival Handbook" series. His tongue-in-cheek answer is not pretty: "You lose your job, you run out of savings or a safety net, have to sell [your] home, it's a down market and you can't sell your house, you move, pull the kids out of school, it's not easy to get another job and your whole lifestyle has to change".

As jobless rates go up, duration of the job search usually follows

Conventional wisdom has long called for you to stash away up to six months of living expenses to carry you through a financial emergency or job loss. But with more job hunts lasting longer than half a year, backup funds can dwindle, and you will have to make more and more tough financial choices.

It may be painful to think about bad things happening, but you have to make sure you are budgeting appropriately and living *below* your means. Here are some things to keep in mind, starting now:

## While You're Working

Double that emergency fund. Begin living frugally with the savings applied to emergency savings. Consider downsizing your living quarters if you are renting, or consider taking in a roommate.

Since it's easier to get credit while you're employed, opening another credit card or a home-equity line of credit in case money becomes tight if you are unemployed. Use this credit only as a last resort.

## When the Word Comes Down

File for unemployment benefits immediately. A severance package from your employer could delay your eligibility, many of the unemployment offices are overwhelmed right now and are behind.

Call your landlord or lender if your layoff results in immediate financial instability.

Ask about deferred-payment plans for rent or find out if your lender offers programs to restructure any loans, says Ms. Robertson. If you're financially stable, you may still want to alert your landlord or lender to your employment situation in case you have trouble making future payments.

Look into all your health-insurance options. The government made some modifications to the federal COBRA law, which allows people to extend their previous coverage, but know that this isn't always the most affordable plan. Young and healthy? A high-deductible plan might still be more affordable.

## The First Six Months

Develop a bare-bones budget, stick to it, so your severance or emergency funds last as long as possible.

Prioritize your debts. When the bills come, pay the big ones -- such as rent or mortgage, utilities and car payments -- before making minimum payments on your credit cards. If money gets tight, consider further downsizing your home or selling any nonessential cars, electronics, jewelry or other valuables.

## Six Months and Beyond

De-invest. Start by looking for securities you might liquidate in nonretirement accounts. Potential tax write-offs could help make the losses easier to stomach. If you have a capital loss, you can write that off against any gains.. Or you can write off up to \$3,000 of a capital loss against any other income."

Then tap your Roth IRA. This money grows tax-free, and you can usually withdraw contributions with no tax liability. This should be a measure of last resort, we want that money to remain in that tax shelter.

Keep your hands off your traditional IRA or 401(k) until the very last moment. You'll have to pay taxes on those withdrawals, and you'll also pay penalties. You'll lose all of the compounding interest and yield. The probability of you replacing those dollars is remote, the tendency for most is to spend, not replace."

## First Things First When Sudden Unemployment Hits

By Dawn Rosenberg McKay, [About.com](#) Guide  
[http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/jobloss/ht/job\\_loss.htm](http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/jobloss/ht/job_loss.htm)

If you just became unemployed, you are probably dealing with a lot of different feelings right now, one of them being fear. Unemployment makes you wonder how you are going to make ends meet, what you will do if you become ill and what you are going to do next. Find out how to answer all these questions and perhaps ease your fear.

1. Find out if you are eligible for government unemployment benefits. If you live in the U.S. see [How to Apply for Unemployment Benefits](#).
2. Determine how long your financial resources will last.
3. If your health benefits are paid by your employer, find out how to maintain those benefits. Most likely, you will be able to purchase benefits through COBRA (The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act). The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) also protects your right to health insurance coverage if you lose your job. If you don't find a job before your group policy with your former employer expires, your new employer doesn't provide health insurance benefits for employees or doesn't provide it for your family members, Cobra provides your right to purchase insurance on your own.

4. Determine whether a career change is in order. If layoffs are rampant in your fields, you may want to consider making a change to a field that is growing, or at least stable.
5. If you would like to change careers, find out what occupation you want to go into. You may need professional help with making this decision.
6. Take this time to spruce up your skills. Find out what skills are most valuable to employers.
7. Now you can begin your job search. Write your resume, review your job interviewing skills and tell your network contacts about your current status in case they have leads.

### Tips:

- Realize you are in a very stressful situation, and being upset, or even angry, is normal.
- Take a little break to evaluate your situation, but try not to wallow in self-pity.
- Learn from this experience.

## Common Mistakes Older Job Seekers Make

### **Kicking Back and Taking a Break**

**Fix:** Keep busy. Employers look for self-starters. Remain active by consulting or blogging in your field, so you can raise your profile. When Randy Rieland, 63, got his new job he was hired by a colleague he had known years before: “I had kept in touch with her, and she knew the work I was now doing. She didn’t care about age.”

### **Using Dated Email Accounts**

**Fix:** AOL and Yahoo email addresses mark you as outdated. Consider using Google or Outlook, and create a professional email address for your job hunt. If your name has already been claimed, add something that identifies your profession, such as jsmitheditor or jsmithmarketing.

### **Missing a Digital Presence**

**Fix:** Tweet, friend and connect. Consider this: 94 percent of 1,855 recruiters and HR professionals surveyed in one study credited LinkedIn as the essential source for recruiting. Use social media. “The biggest mistake I see is older job seekers confusing privacy with invisibility,” says Susan P. Joyce, an online job-search expert.

### **Lacking Salary Flexibility**

**Fix:** Temper salary demands. This is a deal breaker for lots of older workers, who find it insulting to be offered less than they were making in their last job. One way to soften the blow is to negotiate for more flextime, vacation days and other perks that can bump up your package so you don’t lose face.

### **Overlooking Contacts**

**Fix:** Network, network, network. This is business. You never know who might be in a position to help or introduce you to someone who can. Dig deep into your network to connect with folks you may have worked with years ago, or college and high school classmates (think Facebook). Even parents of your kids’ friends can help.

### **Overdoing Your Résumé**

**Fix:** Limit yours to two pages. Recruiters will scan it in 20 or 30 seconds. Choose a traditional font such as Times New Roman. Tell a story with short snippets: that you cut costs by a certain amount, or improved sales by 25 percent. Restrict your work history to the past 10 years. And proofread your résumé!—

### **Ruling Out Jobs**

**Fix:** Don’t overthink the job description. Treat a job posting as an ideal. Often it’s a wish list of what a company would love a new employee to have, but only a number of the requirements are really essential. A good attitude and a solid work history will carry you the rest of the way.

### **Waiting for the Perfect Job**

**Fix:** Stop living in the past. Don’t pass on a job because you don’t think it’s an ideal fit. It might be; it’s just not what you had been doing. When it comes to landing a job, don’t be stuck in the idea that you need to replace the job you had before. Look at your skill set and experience as transferable.

### **Discover Yourself Through Your Work**

Discover tools and resources to achieve successful next steps for [career and retirement](#)

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## Help! Why Can't I Find A Job?

By Richards. Pearson, [YourHub.com](http://YourHub.com) Contributor  
Adapted from : [www.YourHub.com](http://www.YourHub.com)

We are, unfortunately, in a slow growth economy, which has businesses — large and small — in a wait-and-see mode regarding expansion plans. The labor department reports that there are 4.6 unemployed (not even counting long-term unemployed now off the benefit rolls) for each job opening. That is an improvement from the depths of the recession of nearly 7-to-1, but not much solace for those facing an average of nearly five others competing for every open job.

What has exacerbated the situation is that businesses saw worker productivity rise by a phenomenal 6 percent at the end of 2009, after the all the bloodletting (layoffs) during the recession. Each remaining worker was able to produce more and now companies want to see solid signs of economic growth prior to re-employing workers - and these are almost non-existent in housing, consumer confidence, and yes, jobs! (It takes a job to buy goods and services.) The U.S. is not yet even generating enough new jobs to cover the new entrants into the workforce each year - students graduating - let alone jobs for the unemployed.

Jobs websites are really just the electronic equivalent of "help wanted" ads of the past. Posting your resume on these sites is really a shotgun approach to finding employment, since companies have the luxury of only selecting candidates to interview who have the "exact" skill set they are looking for. If you don't know the requirements of the position and customize your resume, by highlighting your near-perfect match to the job skills sought, it is a waste of your time.

The Internet is a great tool to find jobs in two ways: First, by giving you an easy and convenient way to stay connected to your network of friends, extended family, former co-workers, classmates, and industry colleagues. This is where you will have the greatest odds of finding jobs that mesh with your unique skill set and you may get some one in your extended network to walk your resume into the hiring manager. But the number one rule of networking is "give before you receive,," offering to make introductions or other help they may need. Secondly, the Internet makes researching companies to find jobs in your field as easy as it has ever been.

There is so much information available from company websites, press releases, competitors, and other public information that you can learn about what companies employ people with your skills, which ones are expanding and those likely to hire in the near future. Use your network connections in websites like LinkedIn,

You cannot simply ask people for assistance finding a job until you have established a give-and-take relationship with them — by first offering to make introductions or other help they may need. Secondly, the Internet makes researching companies to find jobs in your field as easy as it has ever been. There is so much information available from company websites, press releases, competitors, and other public information that you can learn about what companies employ people with your skills, which ones are expanding and those likely to hire in the near future. Use your network connections in websites like LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook to locate people who know people in these companies for an "in" for you. Use these same sites to connect with recruiters through recruitment Tweetchat sessions like #jobhuntchat, #tchat, and #hirefriday. You will be amazed at how many people are willing to help you get back into the workforce.

You may also be looking in the wrong places. In the past two decades, small businesses have created over two-thirds of all new jobs. Determine what transferable skills you have to offer to a small business and target some to make connections. It may be you will have to convince them it is time to expand and to bring you on as a contract worker to prove you can help grow their business - without the risk of hiring a full-time employee.

On this last point, find two or three temporary employment companies that specialize in your field or a one closely related. There is no better way to get your foot in the door to determine if you blend in with the company's culture and they offer what you desire in an employer.

Good luck in your search. We all hope for a stronger recovery to materialize shortly.

## How To Stay Positive During Your Job Search

By Dawn Rosenberg McKay, [About.com](http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/jobloss/a/chin_up.htm) Guide  
[http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/jobloss/a/chin\\_up.htm](http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/jobloss/a/chin_up.htm)

Losing your job can be devastating. You have to deal with loss of income, loss of health insurance, and the feeling of rejection. Of course if you find a job quickly those feelings may all be alleviated. However, in a tough job market, finding a job can be difficult. Extremely talented people can be out of work for months at a time. Hopefully a combination of your severance package, unemployment insurance, and your savings will sustain you financially. COBRA (The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act) will help you continue your health insurance for a while. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) will help you continue your health insurance if your insurance from your employer expires before you find a new job.

The hardest part of being out of work for an extended period of time will be keeping a positive attitude when a job search turns from weeks into months. And it's imperative that you keep a positive attitude, both for your own emotional well-being as well as for the impression you give to potential employers. Here are some things you can do to keep your chin up when your job search seems to be heading downhill fast.

While you should spend a respectable amount of time on your job search, you should take time away from it too. Find something you enjoy doing and spend a few hours a week doing it.

- Take the time to do things you don't have time to do while you're working, i.e. spending time with your children during the week instead of only on weekends.
- Take on household chores you didn't have time for when you were employed.
- Volunteer. Find a project that can use your skills and talents and spend some time on it. Just be sure not to abandon it entirely when you find a job.
- Learn a new skill. There are some free online courses available as well as low-cost courses available through continuing education in your community.
- Go to a movie matinee. The crowds are much smaller and the prices are usually lower.
- Join a job hunting support group like the ones listed on the [Riley Guide](#). Share your experiences with others in the same situation and network.
- Meet friends for lunch.
- Take long walks.
- Read. Borrow books from your public library.



## Make Your Company Research Count

By Alison Doyle, [About.com](#) Guide

<http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/employerresearch/a/companyresearch.htm>

### Why spend time on company research?

There are several good reasons why it's worth investigating companies. First of all, spending some time looking for and at employers will give you an idea of what companies are in your industries and fields of choice. You will be able to determine which companies are hiring and what types of job openings they have. If you're interviewing, you will be able to find out everything you need to know about the company before you sit down for an interview. In addition, you will be a well-prepared candidate for the job.

#### **Focus on your industry - or on your area of interest and expertise.**

Spend some of your valuable company research time investigating the needs and benefits of organizations in your industry that appear to offer the world. Do they specifically need people in your field? Or are they generalizing to, as they say, "cherry pick the workforce." You don't want to find yourself welcomed one day and then laid off six months later. If you can, talk to people who work there to determine whether it's a place you want to work, and if they would really appreciate your particular skills.

It is also helpful to find out the company history, financial stability, products and services, personnel, and perhaps some information about the company culture and how you will fit in; most companies, large and small, have web sites (see below) where they strut their best stuff.

Preparing for an interview is another reason to research employers. You'll want to know as much about your potential employer as possible. Standard interview questions are "what do you know about us" and "why do you want to work here."

Research will enable you to have the right response - and the right questions.

#### **Use your connections.**

If you have a connection that will help you find inside information, use it. Do you know someone who works there? Ask them if they can help. If you're a college grad ask your Career Office if they can give you a list of alumni who work there. Then call or email and ask for assistance.

#### **Then use directories which will help you find those companies.**

You can search Hoover's Online by company name or keyword. Big Book Yellow Pages allows you to search by business name, category or location. Vault and WetFeet offer job seekers an in-depth look inside some of the hottest industries. They also provide career advice and company and industry profiles.

If you're interested in big business you can browse the Fortune 500 top companies list. Then take a look at the snapshot for company details, revenues and contact information. Fortune provides similar lists for the 100 Fastest Growing Companies and the 100 Best Companies to Work For.

#### **Want to ace that interview?**

Read anything and everything you can about that employer. Use Google to find the employer's web site. Then review the site to see what the company is saying about itself.

Next, take a look at what the rest of the world is saying; Vault Reports is a good resource to find specific, detailed information about a particular employer.

# Keep Hope Alive

By Anna Prior  
Excerpt from : The Wall Street Journal 22 Feb 2009 Possibility of Lay Off

Unemployment is one of life's most stressful situations, especially since the average job seeker can expect to spend 4-5 months beating the bushes for their own next permanent position. Unemployment experts advise the unemployed to stay on top of three vital aspects of your life: Your emotions, your money and your job search. Here are the first of these.

**Your Emotions** You may experience a number of different emotions during your period of unemployment:

Fear - Anger - Helplessness - Depression - Shame - Worthlessness

Whatever you may be feeling, the best antidotes are to recognize – not deny – your emotions, deal with them and take action. Be good to yourself by engaging in positive activities. For example:

Gain the support of family and friends. Pour out any anxieties you might be feeling. Get it off your chest.

Join a job-hunting support group. To find one in your area, check with your local community college, community action agency or employment service. A good support group can provide excellent networking opportunities and job leads.

Take a self-inventory and develop an action plan for how you are going to attack this new challenge. Setting short-term and longterm goals is the best remedy for depression.

Remain physically active. Go for a walk or jog every day or play outside with your children or pets.

Catch up on hobbies or house chores that you have been meaning to do.

Keep regular hours. Get lots of sleep .Eat regular, healthy meals.

Most of all, remind yourself that you still have a job – only this job is to locate a satisfying, long-term position... and it's a difficult job. So do whatever it takes to keep

your spirits and your energy level high. You will need to draw heavily on both.

**Your Money** But how will I pay my bills? This is the first lament of anyone who suddenly finds themselves without a job. Don't despair. Take immediate action to shore up your financial situation:

Apply for unemployment compensation as soon as possible, preferably the next day.

Figure out where you stand with your bills, write down everything and prioritize in terms of importance.

Take a tally of all incoming money:

Severance pay -Unemployment -Spouse income -Dividends and interest

List assets and determine their current value:

Home equity -Savings accounts -401(k) -Stocks and bonds - Life insurance cash value - Automobiles

Determine the gap between expenses and income and then develop a plan on how you are going to stay afloat. Options:

*Temporary job -Savings account -Home equity loan - Retirement or Life insurance loan - Sell some assets – Cut down on fixed and variable expenses*

Decide which monthly bills can be met in their entirety. Do whatever is necessary to pay the mortgage or rent and the car payment.

Negotiate a drawn-out payment plan with creditors. Don't wait until you are in a financial crisis. Explain your situation immediately and find out what type of plan they will offer.

Put your spending on a diet, buy with cash, phase out credit cards immediately.

End restaurant meals, buy groceries in bulk

Turn off the lights

Question all purchases

**[Link to Laugh-Live-Lift](#)**

## Laugh - Live – Lift, 10 Ways to Stay Motivated During Your Job Search

Posted By: Phil Rosenberg In: Business Professional  
<http://www.businessworkforce.com/articles/details-3897-article.html>

How do you stay motivated while in career transition? A reader asked me to cover this topic.

if you live in the Northern part of the US, it's cold, snowy, and tough. If you're out of work, this time of year can be depressing. Staying motivated and keeping a positive attitude is SO important in your job search. If you're depressed, interviewers can hear and see it.

How do you keep your motivation up, even during the dreary winter months? Here's 10 tips:

1. Set an alarm clock and keep a schedule. Treat your job search just like a job, and you're less likely to feel lost.
2. Take a walk each morning, no matter how cold or snowy it might be. You finally have the opportunity to get out, get your blood flow going, see some daylight, and get some fresh air. Fresh air and sunlight does WONDERS for your frame of mind.
3. Exercise – It doesn't matter what you do, or how long you do it. Just getting the blood moving through your veins will make you feel better, pump up your adrenaline, and wake you up!
4. Get out of the house – make networking lunch appointments, or if you don't have lunch meetings, go out for lunch where you can see other people. Panera Bread is an awesome place – Lots of business people have meetings there or work there

between meetings. Plus, there's probably free WiFi .

5. Say Hi to people – Step outside your comfort zone to meet at least one new person every day. Where? Everywhere – at Panera, walking on the street, gas station, Grocery Store, bank. You never know what the person in line at the grocery does – or who they know. Plus, you'll start looking forward to the new friend you'll meet today.
6. Attend Networking events – More places to meet people who are in your field, or can connect you to people in your line of work.
7. Celebrate Success – Celebrate every success, no matter how small. Soon you'll find a reason to celebrate each day. Your celebration can be as small as a piece of chocolate, or as big as a special evening out. It's Tuesday...WHO HOO!!!
8. Read a book – Read something you enjoy ...something other than emails. Carve an extra 30 minutes per day to read.
9. Learn or try something new – Take a class, live or e-learning, to pick up new skills. This is ESPECIALLY important for IT professionals who must recreate their knowledge base every 3 years to keep their skills up to date.
10. Eat Healthy – Prepare and make healthy foods, you'll feel SO much better, and have more energy. You no longer have to dine at Chez Toyota for lunch, snarfing down a Big Mac, while driving with your knees.

## Secret Weapon: Set Deadlines

? Author  
? Source

Want to get hired faster than up to 97% of other job seekers? Do two simple things that almost nobody else is doing: Write down your job search goal; set deadlines. Read it out loud at least 10 times a day!

Sound silly? Well it's not. Think about people who have been wonderfully successful in their lives. Almost every one of them have/had written goals with deadlines. Every one of them had a plan and a focus on making that plan a reality! (Let me tell you about my son, Jim. The whole time he was growing up and into early adult-hood, he had a plan which he shared with anyone who would listen. "I'm going to work with computers and I'm going to be rich enough to retire by the time I'm 35." I heard that, I swear, a hundred times a month! Jim just turned 33 and early this year he "retired", moved to Costa Rica, and is starting other businesses there.)

Only 3 to 10% of the population have written, articulated goals and deadlines; less than 10% have taken the effort to decide exactly what they want in life and have written it in clear, specific goals. Those are the people who rise to the top of their professions while most of us simply go with the flow - wherever chance takes us.

So - start by developing a mini-blueprint for your job search success. (Would you have enough faith to hire an architect to build you a home without a blueprint?) Develop a clear, specific job goal and then burn it into your mind so you will get focused, get motivated, get hired quickly.

Decide on the job you want and write it down. Write it on a 3x5 card. Make it look something like this: "It's July 7th(fill in the date you intend to be working). I am an outstanding (job title) who adds value to the company lucky enough to have me. I'm

making \$XX,XXX, in a stimulating environment, doing work I love, surrounded by co-workers I enjoy." - writing a goal like this forces you to get clear on what you want (as opposed to "I'll take any job that pays the bills - maybe working in an office or something..." - writing a specific employment goal with a due date (so your subconscious knows you are serious), you will be ahead of the vast majority of job seekers.

Reinforce your goal. In order to make sure your goal is crystal clear in your mind's eye, read your goal out loud 10 times every morning. Then put your 3x5 card in your pocket and refer to it during the day. This will help you organize your life around finding your ideal job. Your subconscious will go to work and help you keep focused on your goal.

You will start to see employment leads where none appeared before. You will begin to see opportunities and possibilities throughout your daily activities - when an old friend calls, when your neighbor returns a tool he borrowed, when you are at the hairdressers or the bank. (When this happens to other job seekers, we call them "lucky", "being in the right place at the right time". In reality, it is being focused on a goal and finding opportunities to help us reach that goal.)

Try this simple two-step process for the next 30 days and see for yourself. The worst that can happen is that you will have a very clear idea of the job you seek. The best that can happen is that you will be working at that job, or something better.

What do you have to lose?

A goal without an action plan is a daydream.

## Step by-Step

Author  
Source

The Church's Employment program does not provide you with a job. It provides you with guidance and skills to network, research leads, prepare resumes and to be effective in interviews. Your local unit should be actively involved in your use of [ldsjobs.org](http://ldsjobs.org) and provide review of your progress. If you participate in the Stake meetings you will receive additional training and support in obtaining or upgrading employment. The regional employment center is available for a fine tuning your resume and interview skills.

The following is an outline for the unemployed and under employed to effectively utilize the Church's employment program.

### Initial organizing strategy

- Meet with the employment specialist, the quorum leader and a home/visiting teacher
- Discuss your job field, training, experience and employment options
- Identify possible ward member candidates to act as a Job Coach
- Obtain an account on [www.ldsjobs.org](http://www.ldsjobs.org) and complete the initial contact information.
- Obtain an Employment History form to create a one sheet database
- Obtain a Dynamic Resume template.
- Draft your master resume, attempt to provide enough material to fill 2 pages
- Where possible create and save a computer file on a thumb drive or e-mail yourself a copy.
- Attend the Stake Employment Night with disk, rework and edit the resume to one page

### Review your financial situation

- Apply for unemployment assistance if eligible
- Complete a monthly income and expense budget
- Identify family resources and support you may be able to call upon
- Meet with the Priesthood or Relief Society leadership to review the resources.

### Ongoing weekly efforts

- Meet each Sunday with the employment specialist, quorum leader and/or home teacher and report the status of your efforts.
- Meet with the Job Coach to review progress and brainstorm options and opportunities
- Complete the requirements for job searching and recording to comply with the state unemployment insurance program
- Review seminar offerings at the **Church Regional Employment Center**.
- Check for new job listings at [www.ldsjobs.org](http://www.ldsjobs.org)
- Attend the Stake Employment night, get resume suggestions and obtain networking leads and polish your interviewing skills
- Actively develop and record networking contacts and research leads
- Research companies and open job descriptions, tailor the resume to fit the (V) position
- Interview when invited, dress well and follow up with a thank you letter the same day

**Comment [DK1]:** Keep or omit. Lots of old information & terms on this page

**Comment [DK2]:** Old name: ERC

