

CAREER TRANSITION  
DOS AND DON'TS



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## WHAT ARE THE TOP FIVE THINGS NOT TO DO WHEN YOU'VE JUST LOST YOUR JOB?

### 1. Don't Panic, but Don't Plan a Hiatus Either

- When you panic, you run the risk of saying and doing things that can do more harm than good. You have one chance to make a great first impression so be sure to stay calm, collected and thoughtful about how you move forward.
- We advise against taking a hiatus too, unless you have good reason to take a break. Gaps in your employment history will always need to be explained and could hurt your chances of impressing a future employer. Plus, we've seen job searches that stall when momentum is lost, resulting in longer career transitions.
- Your Career Coach at A.J. O'Connor Associates (AJO) will cover appropriate first steps based on your personal situation, career goals and immediate needs and concerns.



### 2. Don't talk negatively about your former employer

- It is likely to reflect more on you than your former employer. Even when you have good reason to be negative, it is wise to act professionally and keep your emotions in check when speaking about your situation. Whether you're in conversation with family, friends or neighbors or formal networking and interviewing situations, take the high road and it will repay you with the positive impression you will create.
- Avoid negative colleagues who are in the same situation and unable to move on. It will affect your mental state and draw you backwards instead of forwards.
- Your Coach will strategize with you on what to say about your job loss and current circumstances.

### 3. Don't call everyone you know and ask for a job

- This is an example of a hasty action that can create a poor first impression. Plus, it puts your contacts in an uncomfortable position.
- Your Career Coach will guide you through a process to help you network effectively and purposefully.

### 4. Don't jump at the first job offer

- Unless it is your ideal job and a strong match for your skills and experience, avoid jumping at the first opportunity.
- Your transition is a great opportunity to take a step back and review your career to date. It's a chance to invest in yourself and where necessary, to recalibrate your career.

Many find this time a valuable and rewarding experience. Good career planning involves evaluating your skills and interests against market opportunities. You never know where this journey might lead.

- If a potential opportunity presents itself early, discuss how best to respond with your Career Coach.

## 5. **Don't isolate yourself**

- Surround yourself with positive people. Participate in social activities that keep you energized and emotionally connected. Meet new people by volunteering in your community, joining job search networking groups, taking up a new interest or activity.
- If work was the main focus in your life, take this opportunity to set new personal goals for a healthier lifestyle.

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*“What is the difference between an obstacle and an opportunity? Our attitude toward it. Every opportunity has a difficulty, and every difficulty has an opportunity.”*  
**J. Sidlow Baxter**

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## WHAT ARE THE TOP FIVE THINGS TO DO AS SOON AS YOU'VE LOST YOUR JOB?

### 1. **Get your finances and health care insurance in order**

- Meet with your financial adviser if you have one. Consider enlisting the help of an adviser if you don't. Are you a newbie to financial planning? If so, you may wish to check out the excellent [Sharpen Your Financial Focus](#) program from the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC).
- Create a budget to manage your finances over the next few months. This NFCC [budget worksheet](#) provides a comprehensive checklist and online calculator.
- Review your health care coverage and retirement benefit options. For more information, check out the [Department of Labor Q&A for Dislocated Workers](#). Whatever you do, resist the temptation to tap into your 401K.
- See [Financial Tips After a Job Loss](#) to learn more.



## 2. Register for unemployment benefits (if eligible)

- Establish that you are eligible. See [How to Claim Unemployment Benefits](#) to learn more.
- Contact your local Unemployment Office for your unemployment benefit without delay.

## 3. Set goals for your physical and emotional well-being

- Job loss can lead to anxiety and depression. Let's face it, transition can be challenging. It's common to experience highs and lows during this time. Keeping your attitude as positive as possible will be one of your best assets in transition. Recognizing, accepting and validating your feelings about your situation will allow you to clear your mind and stay focused. We encourage you to speak with your family and friends as well as your Coach.
- To build and maintain your energy and confidence, create a plan to ensure you eat well, exercise regularly, get plenty of rest and participate in social activities. These are four important pillars for sustaining your physical and emotional well-being, which in turn will ensure that you present yourself to potential employers in the best possible light.
- See [Job Loss and Unemployment Stress: Tips for Staying Positive During Your Job Loss](#) to learn more.

## 4. Focus on future goals and plan next career steps

- Define your ideal opportunity and career next steps in terms of:
  - **WHAT** would you like to do next? (the ideal role you'd like to play)
  - **WHERE** (geographies you are willing and able to consider; travel, commute)
  - **HOW** (full time; part-time; some time; telecommuting, etc.)
  - **FOR WHOM** (target companies and target industries) or for yourself (free-lancing, consulting, entrepreneurship, franchise, volunteerism, etc.)
  - **FOR HOW MUCH** (your compensation and benefit requirements)
- Your Coach will be able to help you strategize on your future plans (or combinations of options) and help you set a course to achieve these goals.
- If you are considering a career change, see [Career Planning the Second Time Around](#) to learn more.



**5. Collect existing marketing and other materials (resume, LinkedIn profile, performance reviews, etc.)**

- Your Career Coach will help you through the process of creating an impactful and competitive resume and LinkedIn profile to showcase your skills and accomplishments. He/she will also share strategies and tactics for strengthening your presence online so that you stand out and get found.
- Get a jump start by assembling your existing materials including your resume, LinkedIn profile URL along with any other materials that document your interests, skills and accomplishments (E.g., recent performance reviews and assessments, etc.).



We hope this information encourages you to reach new goals beyond your last organization, turning unforeseen challenges into new possibilities and uncovering opportunities to excel at what comes next.

With dedicated coaching support, personalized attention, technology tools and learning resources, we look forward to partnering with you to reach your goals.

To learn more, visit [ajoconnor.com](http://ajoconnor.com) or contact us at 800-539-3006