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Preparing for your first day of work



January 27, 8:11 AM
by Heather Huhman, [Entry Level Careers Examiner](#)

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Your first day of work at your first job out of college can be an extremely stressful situation. To help reduce your stress – and impress your supervisor and co-workers – there are some things you can do to prepare.

1. Remember who helped you. “The first thing on your list should be to call or write to all of your mentors, friends and contacts who helped you with your job search, if you haven’t done so already. Thank them for their part in your good news, and let them know where you’ll be working,” said Alison Blackman Dunham, creator of [The Advice Sisters](#).

2. Take a test drive. “The last thing you want to do is be late for the first day of work. Take a test drive during rush hour to see how long it will take you to arrive on time at work,” said Roberta Chinsky Matuson, president of [Human Resource Solutions](#).

3. Go shopping. “Please make sure you know the dress code and are dressed accordingly. My biggest pet peeve in my first job was seeing girls who looked like they were ready for a night at the club rather than a day in the office. Ladies, watch your cleavage and thongs please. Gentlemen, Abercrombie shirts may not cut it anymore,” said [Nicole Crimaldi](#), founder of Executive Vision, Inc.

4. Understand the company and industry. “Understanding what the company has been doing and plans on doing can really help you select the best footing for your first few weeks. Read the company’s annual report and look at recent press-releases. Finally, see if you can find an overview of the market, who the ‘players’ are, and major change themes,” said Will Robinson, CEO of [VirtualJobCoach](#).

5. Confirm to whom and where you are reporting. “Sometimes there is a new employee orientation. Sometimes you go directly to your group. Don’t wander around and end up late because you went to the wrong place,” said Caroline Ceniza-Levine, co-founder of [SixFigureStart](#).

6. Meet with an employee of the company. “Call upon an alumni contact, family friend or someone who interviewed you who works for the company you are joining. Spend some time asking questions about policies and procedures, the dress code and anything you may be nervous or unclear about,” said Christine Bolzan, founder of [Graduate Career Coaching](#).

7. Evaluate yourself. Susan Kennedy of [Career Treking](#) recommends new entry-level employees perform a self assessment before they start their jobs and then review it periodically to make sure they are viewed the way they want to be. Here are some questions they can ask themselves, she says.

- What kind of an employee do I want to be? How will I do that and how am I doing?
- Who do I need to please and what will it take to make a good first impression?
- How will I develop my internal network of supporters?
- Who seems to be the most difficult to get along with, and how will I manage that?

8. Get enough sleep. “There will be lots of excitement and anticipation that comes with the new gig, but you may come off as a little wired – and perhaps

Heather Huhman

Entry Level Careers Examiner



My Examiners

Heather Huhman has been a mentor to individuals seeking entry-level positions, particularly in the public relations field, for many years. She has “been there, done that” when it comes to young careers. Contact Heather at [this address](#) and follow her on [Twitter](#).

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The Ford Story

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strung out – if you haven't had enough sleep," said Narciso Tovar, vice president of public relations at [mundayMorning](#).

9. Eat breakfast. "Your first week is likely to be long and dull – filling out HR paperwork, listening to training modules, shadowing and attending meetings. Make sure you fuel up in the morning so you can make it through the day. Plus, you won't know what the 'norm' is as far as when your co-workers usually go to lunch or if they eat quickly at their desk, so you may be stuck waiting a while," said Crimaldi.

10. Stash a few snacks in a purse, briefcase, or shoulder bag. "Often you will be expected to meet with several people on your first day. Occasionally, your need to eat lunch will be overlooked. Be prepared for this by packing a few easy-to-eat and nutritious snacks," said Anne Brown, author of "[Grad to Great: Discover the Secrets to Success in Your First Career](#)."

11. Adjust your attitude. "Be upbeat and enthusiastic even if this is not your dream job because even a menial job can be a stepping stone to your dream job," said Greg Bennett, national practice director sales, marketing and C-level search with [The Mergis Group](#).

12. Get ready for paperwork. "Bring things like your driver's license and social security card with you. You'll probably be filling out tons of paperwork, and it's always great to be prepared. If they haven't checked your references, bring complete reference information including the name, title, phone number, address, e-mail address, and fax number of your contacts. Additionally, it's a good idea to bring a copy of your résumé in case it's needed on file," said Kristen Fischer, author of "[Ramen Noodles, Rent and Résumés](#)."

13. Arrive early. "If your shift starts at 8 a.m., arrive 15 minutes earlier. Chances are you'll be shuffled around a little and you want to make sure that you create strong work habits. Plus, it always looks good to be a little early," said Fischer.

Join me and [J.T. O'Donnell](#), a career coach, workplace consultant and founder of [Careerealism](#), for a free, live, online chat about crafting winning cover letter and résumés for internship and entry-level job candidates. The chat will begin at **4 p.m. EST / 1 p.m. PST on Sunday, February 8, 2009**. [Click here to register](#).

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- [One Day, One Internship](#)
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- [Quarterlife](#)
- [ROCS College Student Staffing](#)
- [YouIntern.com](#)

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- [CareerJet.com](#)
- [Craigslist](#)
- [GreatPlaceJobs](#)
- [Indeed.com](#)
- [JobFox](#)
- [LinkUp](#)
- [RealMatch](#)
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Resource Toolbox

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- [Gotta Mentor](#)
- [Gradspot](#)
- [Green Candy](#)
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- [InternshipRatings.com](#)
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Recommended Reading

- [150 Best Recession-Proof Jobs](#)
- [200 Best Jobs for College Graduates](#)
- [301 Smart Answers to Tough Interview Questions](#)
- [Bad Bosses, Crazy Coworkers & Other Office Idiots](#)
- [Bulletproof Your Job](#)
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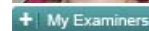


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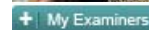


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