

Life Hacks For The Recently Unemployed

You're stressed, confused, and worried about putting food on the table, but there's hope. Even though unemployment stings, it doesn't have to be a slippery slope to financial ruin. Follow these tips to keep your head above water and work to get through this crisis in one piece.

1. File For Unemployment And Health Insurance Now

If you were let go from your job through no fault of your own, you could be eligible for unemployment. Although the requirements for unemployment vary by state, it's in your best interest to apply as soon as possible.

Unemployment is not retroactive—you receive benefits starting from the day of your application—so waiting 2 or 3 weeks thinking another job is just around the corner could cost you.

Besides unemployment, it's smart to apply for COBRA health insurance while you're job-hunting. Visit [COBRA's FAQ](#) for more details.

2. Create A Monthly Budget

If you don't already have a monthly budget, now is the time to start. Take time to sit down and seriously think about all of your expenses.

Don't just list the big-ticket items. Your car payment, mortgage, and groceries probably take up a huge chunk of your spending, but little things like toll money and fast food can quickly add up.

After you can see where your money is going every month, categorize your expenses into two groups—needs and wants.

3. Remove The Junk From Your Life

Look around your house, and ask yourself just how much “stuff” you really need.

Gather up everything you don't use frequently. And then sell it.

You don't need a laptop AND a tablet AND a phone, and you don't need to spend \$5 on coffee every day.

Eating out is a huge expense. Simply cooking at home can save you up to 75% in some cases.

It will be tough at first, but you might be surprised just how many things you can live without.

4. Cut Large Expenses

If there's a huge gap between your income and expenses, it's time to take more drastic measures.

Consider renting out a spare bedroom or selling your car to buy a much cheaper used one. Stop putting money into a retirement or college savings fund.

Even moving back in with your parents (temporarily) is on the table.

You probably don't like the idea of driving a beat-up car or raiding a savings fund, but these things are luxuries you just can't afford right now.

5. Update Your Resume

If you haven't updated your resume in a while, you could be surprised by all of the new skills you've picked up from your last job. Make sure you include your recent work history.

Since employers love to see applicants who are constantly improving their skill sets, consider attending a seminar or visiting the library to brush up on topics that are relevant to your field.

6. Keep Busy

Don't give yourself time to dwell on the negative aspects of losing your job.

You now have 40+ more hours per week to devote to improving yourself, spending time with family and friends, and righting your financial ship.

Don't spend that extra time moping in bed.

7. Your New Job Should Be Finding A Job

Your mission in life should now be to find another job. Exhaust every option, from online ads to newspapers to walk-ins. Use your time wisely.

Don't hold out for a dream job, though. If prospective employers haven't been biting, take what you can get—even if it's part-time, or somewhere not-so-glamorous.

8. Clean Up Your Social Networks

Many employers look up applicants on social networks like Facebook to see what kind of person you are. If your profiles are littered with shots of you passed out drunk, it could negatively impact your job search.

Also, use any networks you have—whether they're online or in person—to connect and reconnect with professional contacts. Knowing someone with an “in” to a company is half the

battle.

9. Stay Positive

Nothing can be quite as depressing as losing your job. You're feeling frustrated, angry, and lost. But this isn't the end of the world—unless you let it be.

You have to face your financial hardship head-on with solid planning and realistic expectations. While this stressful time of your life won't be gone overnight, as long as you budget well and keep your head up, you're already taking a step in the right direction.