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10 things you should do on your last day at work



Photo: [Jonathan Ruchti](#)

You've found a new position and as your last day of work approaches, you really want to leave the job you disliked with a bang. No matter how tempting it may be to wreak havoc on your last day at work, this is generally not a good idea. Here are some better options that will make your last day at work much easier and leave a good impression with your colleagues.

1. Do tie up all loose ends. It's not fair to create extra work for your colleagues after you have gone, so be sure to let them know the status of your projects on your last day. "Transfer knowledge or information to those who need it. Just because you're leaving doesn't give you the right to leave jobs undone or your employer in the lurch," said [Lois P. Frankel](#), author of *Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office*. "Be certain that you have closed the loop on all of the projects assigned to you—it adds to your professionalism."

2. Do express your emotions in an appropriate manner. You may feel a lot of sadness when you leave a job, especially if you have been fired or downsized. However, it's best to remain professional, no matter how you may feel.

"Small displays of emotions are okay as long as they are small displays of emotions. Nobody wants to comfort a sobbing coworker," said Karen L. Martin of [Strategies for Human Resources](#). "That can weaken your reputation with those who may be helpful later."

3. Do reflect on your experience at your job and take a personal inventory. "If you have had your nose to the proverbial grindstone for a few years, your resume and your 30-second personal pitch will need some freshening up," said Lorne Epstein, coauthor of *You're Hired! Interview Skills to Get the Job*. "You have learned a great deal over the past few years, which is very cool and very valuable to your next employer."

4. Do file for unemployment as soon as possible. If you are not going into a new job, don't wait to file for unemployment. "Every day you don't file is money you and your family are losing," said Epstein. "Unless you agree to not file for unemployment insurance, get yourself into your state's unemployment process—as you never know when you will need the financial resource."

5. Do delete all of your personal files from your computer. Be sure to grab all of your personal files on your last day and save them or e-mail them to yourself.

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6. Do make it easy for people to find you. Be sure to give your colleagues your information so that you can keep them as part of your professional network. Also, if your company has an alumni network or a group on [LinkedIn](#) or [Facebook](#), sign up for them.

Additionally, it is a good idea to create an autoresponder for your e-mail, as well as a voice mail message, letting people know that you have left the company and how they can get in touch with you.

7. Do get your references lined up. "Make sure you spend a few minutes with everyone that you have worked directly with, or for, and get their personal contact information and ask if you can use them as a reference. Do this even if you have already found your next job," said Rahul D. Yodh, Partner at [Link Legal Search Group](#). "You never know when you will need a good reference. It is important to have their personal

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contact information—with the amount of turnover today, you don't want to have to try and track someone down a few years from now."

8. Do update your social networking profiles. When you update your employment status on [social networking](#) sites, this will result in people contacting you for an update and they may be able to point you in the direction of a new opportunity.

9. Do leave on an empowered note. "No matter what your job, whether CEO or floor sweeper, it is very important for your own dignity's sake to personally shake the hand of everyone you worked with and thank them for the opportunity of working together," said Hara Estroff Marano, Editor at Large at *Psychology Today*. "This elevates you at a difficult time and gives you a sense of control. It also gives people an outstanding sense of you as a person who handles difficulty well."

10. Use your Flexible Spending Account. "If you've been saving money through your employer's Flexible Spending Account, you must spend it on your last day of work," said Rebecca Schreiber, Certified Financial Planner at [Solid Ground Financial Planning](#). "Let's say you've been accruing money in this account to pay for [eyeglasses or dental work](#) you have planned. The first day you are no longer employed, you can't get back the money you saved. But if you incur an expense on the last day of work, you can still submit the paperwork later and get reimbursed."

This article originally appeared on my [Workplace Communication Examiner](#) page on July 26, 2009.

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