

Leaving your job – hints and tips

Thinking about quitting your job? Before you hand in your notice, you should be sure this is the right thing to do. Hating your job is not usually enough reason to quit, unless you have another job to go to.

When you do quit, it is important that you do it calmly and professionally, as you may need a reference from your employer further down the line.

You also need to ask yourself, who should I tell first, how much notice should I give, and how honest should I be about my reasons for leaving?

Reasons for quitting

- You have a new job.
- You hate your job - think very carefully before leaving for this reason if you don't have another job to go to.
- Difficult working environment – only think about leaving once you have tried to resolve any differences.
- For a permanent position – you may be working part time or as a temp.
- Personal or family illness – you may be able to ask for extended leave rather than quitting.
- Relocation – you may move too far away to travel every day, or your company may relocate.
- Work schedule and hours – new hours may not suit you.
- Career change – you want to try something completely new.
- Further study – you've decided to go to college or university.

How to resign

Once you have decided to quit your job, the first person you should tell is your manager. It's best if they hear it from you, rather than from gossip going around the office.

The usual way to resign is to tell your manager in person and to write a letter of resignation. This helps maintain a positive relationship with your employer and ensure you receive a good reference in the future.

Depending on your circumstances you may need to quit over the phone, or by email. Only use these methods if you are unable to resign in person.

Writing a letter of resignation

A letter of resignation is a formal way of letting your employer know of your intention to leave. Use the letter to leave your employer with a positive final impression of you. Keep your letter brief and to the point.

Your letter should state that you are leaving and the date that will be your final day. It is courteous to thank your employer for all their help, and for the opportunities you have been given. Wish the company well in the future.

It is not always necessary to give the reasons for your leaving, in some instances though, for example, you are moving half way around the world, it may make sense to explain.

Quitting my email

If it is not possible to resign in person, you may wish to send an email. Always make sure your email is polite and professional, and contains all the necessary information.

Quitting by phone

Quitting your job over the phone is not the most polite way to end your employment. Only do this under extreme circumstances, such as a personal or family illness.

Ask to be put through to your supervisor or manager and explain why you are leaving. If they are not available, find out when they will be and call back. Don't leave a message as it may not get passed on, and it's not very professional or courteous.

Apologise if you are leaving without notice. You may have to arrange to go in and pick up any personal belongings.

How much notice should I give?

The amount of notice you need to give your employer should be stated in your contract. If it doesn't, if you have worked for one month or more, the minimum notice you should give is one week. The amount of time usually depends on how long you have been with the company and the type of contract you are on. The average amount of notice is one month.

Answering the question – Why did you quit your last job?

If you go for a new position, you may be asked "Why are you leaving your current position?" or "Why did you quit your job?". Before you go along to interview, think of the best way to answer these questions. Don't give a negative answer or be derogatory towards your employer.

For ideas on how to answer these questions, see our article [Standard interview questions](#).

Dos and Don'ts

Do

- work the minimum amount of notice required, and if your new job allows, longer, to make it a smooth transition
- clean up your work computer by deleting personal files and emails
- ask your manager how to make the most of your time remaining, and tie up loose ends
- ask for a reference from your manager, as time passes and people come and go, they may forget individuals
- show gratitude for what you have learned in the job.

Don't

- give different people, different reasons for leaving, you will be caught out

- be dishonest about your next move, your manager and former colleagues will be likely to find out
- boast about your new position to colleagues
- give your manager negative feedback about your time spent in their employment.