

Day One Survival Kit

Your Checklist to Crush Your First Day of Work

by Dr Jo Winchester

Starting a new job is a mix of excitement and nerves. You've landed the gig - now it's about showing up prepared, confident, and ready to make a great first impression. This checklist is your go-to plan for a smooth, successful first day - so you can relax and focus on what matters: connecting, learning, and growing.

Before You Arrive: Set Yourself Up for Success

✅ *Do your homework.*

Re-read your job description, find out who you report to, and double-check what time to arrive.

✅ *Plan your route.*

Whether you're driving, walking, or catching a train, know exactly how long it takes. Aim to arrive 10-15 minutes early.

✅ *Dress the part.*

Match your outfit to the workplace culture - neat, confident, and comfortable. If you are not sure, dress up rather than down. It shows you care!

✅ *Pack your bag.*

Bring:

- ID and any HR paperwork
- Notebook and pen
- Lunch, snacks, or coffee money
- A charged phone and charger

✅ *Get your mindset right.*

Remind yourself: They picked you for a reason. You don't have to know everything you just have to show willingness to learn.

First Impressions Matter

- ✓ Smile, introduce yourself, and use people's names.

You don't need to memorise the whole company! Focus on your manager and the people you'll work with most.

- ✓ Be curious, not nervous.

Ask, "What's the best way to do this?" or "Who should I check with before I finish this task?"

- ✓ Listen more than you talk.

Day One is about learning the rhythm, culture, and unspoken rules.

- ✓ Observe the vibe.

What's the tone in meetings? Do people have lunch together or at their desks? Noticing how things work helps you blend in quickly.

- ✓ Bring positive energy.

A friendly, can-do attitude beats over-confidence every time.

Learn the Lay of the Land

- ✓ Understand your team's goals.

Ask, "What does success look like for our team this month?"

- ✓ Find your go-to people.

Who fixes tech issues? Who knows the coffee machine? Identify your unofficial guides early.

- ✓ Take notes.

Write down logins, names, or anything you might forget. It'll save you asking twice.

- ✓ Clarify expectations.

Before you leave, ask your manager:

- What should I focus on first?
- When's a good time to check in again?

Survival Tips for the First Week

✅ Show curiosity.

Ask how different parts of the organisation work. It shows you're thinking big picture.

✅ Be dependable.

If you're not sure, ask; if you say you'll do it, follow through.

✅ Respect time.

Turn up to meetings a few minutes early and wrap up tasks before deadlines.

✅ Reflect each day.

At the end of the day, jot down what you learned, what you enjoyed, and what you'd like to improve.

✅ Keep your energy balanced.

Eat, hydrate, breathe, sleep. No one does their best thinking when they're hangry and tired.

✅ Forgive yourself!

Everyone makes mistakes. Did you forget someone's name? Save a file in the wrong folder? Got lost in the lunch break? Shake it off, admit the fault, apologise, and move on.

Your Day One Confidence Boost

Confidence Moves	Why It Matters	Check it off!
Be early	<i>Shows respect and reliability</i>	
Ask questions	<i>Demonstrates curiosity</i>	
Take notes	<i>Helps you learn faster</i>	
Say thank you	<i>Builds goodwill</i>	
Follow up	<i>Keeps communication clear</i>	
Stay positive	<i>Energy is contagious</i>	

Did you check everything off?? Pat yourself on the back and reward yourself !

Final Thoughts

Everyone feels awkward on their first day- even the CEO did once. The best way to stand out isn't by being perfect; it's by being professional, curious, and kind.

You've got this. Now go make your first impression feel like a lasting one.

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