

# Career Change

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## Six Steps to a Successful Career Change

Making a career change usually means investing both your time and money. As with any investment, it's important to be informed before you make it. Before you make a career change, here are six steps you should take first.

### Steps You Should Take to Make an Informed Career Change

1. **Do a thorough self assessment** (<http://careerplanning.about.com/od/selfassessment/>) : During a self assessment you will use **tools** (<http://careerplanning.about.com/od/careertests/>) that assess, through a series of questions, your values, personality, interests, and skills in order to come up with lists of occupations that might be suitable for you. You may also see these referred to as career tests or self assessment tests.
2. **Write a "List of Occupations to Explore"**: Look over the lists that resulted from the self assessment tools you used. They are probably rather lengthy. You want to come up with a much shorter list, consisting of between five and ten occupations. Circle occupations that appear on multiple lists. Circle occupations you may have considered previously and that you find appealing. Write these occupations down on a separate list titled "Occupations to Explore." Add to that list occupations, from your other lists, about which you know nothing or very little (these unknown occupations may turn out to be the most interesting of all).
3. **Start Researching the Occupations** (<http://careerplanning.about.com/od/exploringoccupations/a/exploration.htm>) **on Your List**: For each occupation on your list, you will want to **look at** (<http://careerplanning.about.com/od/occupations/>) the job description, educational and other requirements, job outlook, advancement opportunities, and earnings.
4. **Continue to Narrow Down your List**: Pare down your list of possible occupations based on what you learned from your research. For example, you may not be willing to put the time and energy into preparing for an occupation for which an advanced degree is required, or you may consider the earnings for a particular occupation inadequate. Use the **quiz** ([http://careerplanning.about.com/od/exploringoccupations/a/occ\\_quiz.htm](http://careerplanning.about.com/od/exploringoccupations/a/occ_quiz.htm)), "Should I Choose This Occupation" to help you with this step.
5. **Conduct Informational Interviews**: At this point one to three occupations should be left on your list. In order to choose one, you will need to gather more information. Even if there is only one occupation left on your list, you shouldn't skip this step since it will serve to verify your choice. The best source of information about an occupation comes from someone who has firsthand knowledge. Conduct an **informational interview** ([http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/occupations/a/info\\_interviews.htm](http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/occupations/a/info_interviews.htm)) with someone working in the field in which you are interested.
6. **Set Goals and Write a Career Action Plan**: By now you should have one occupation you want to pursue. It's time to put a plan in place so you can eventually find a job in that field. First you will need to **set goals** (<http://careerplanning.about.com/od/settinggoals/>) and then, based on the goals you set, write a **career action plan** (<http://careerplanning.about.com/od/careeractionplan/>) that will get you to your final destination.

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