

The Job Seeker's

Ultimate Guide to Remote Work



The work-from-home era is upon us. And the increased necessity for remote jobs changes every aspect of the job search.

The pandemic revealed countless benefits of a full-blown virtual hiring process, and companies aren't getting rid of it any time soon. According to a **2020 survey from Cielo**, 82% of hiring managers will keep using video interviews even after the crisis. And 64% are more willing to consider hiring remote workers.

As everything shifts in the virtual direction, **job seekers** must prepare to navigate the remote job search, virtual interviews, virtual onboarding, and working from home.

For some, this news may be more daunting than exciting. You've spent years honing the skills to craft an impeccable resume and nail in-person interviews. Rest assured that these skills will easily transfer to the virtual process.

After all, the goals and organization of the hiring process aren't changing. But there are several new factors involved that are important for you to learn. That's why, here at CareerShift, we're here to help.

This is the ultimate guide to everything job seekers need to know before entering the world of remote work.

The remote job search



Finding and applying for jobs online is already the norm. In this upcoming work-from-home era, however, certain parts of that **virtual job search** will change.

As a job seeker, you will need to train your mind to view job descriptions, company fit, and resumes through a new lens. In the virtual process, it's vital to pay greater attention to the company's approach to technology, flexibility, communication, and self-reliance.

Job descriptions

For remote positions, it is even more crucial that the job description excites you. When working remotely, you are responsible for keeping yourself motivated each day. And it's much more challenging to do that when you're apathetic toward the work.

Pay attention to equipment requirements as well. Check if listings for remote jobs indicate that the company would provide the laptop, extra monitors, headset, cables, etc. If not, make sure you can have access to everything you would need before applying.

Finding a good fit

One of the drawbacks of the virtual process is the difficulties in understanding company culture. When you're looking at remote jobs, it can be tricky to gauge compatibility knowing you can't meet the company's current employees in person.

Do some research during your remote job search to help figure it out. Looking at the job listing's tone and poking around the company's website can offer useful insights into its attitude and values. Keep in mind that while some jobs wouldn't be a good fit in person, they might be excellent for a remote environment -- and vice versa.

Here's what to look for:



- Continue to take your usual preferences into account. Your standards on inclusion, for example, do not go out the window just because it's a remote job.
- Does their approach to working from home seem to match your style of independent work?
- Do they emphasize communication and team building?
- Are they looking out for employee wellness?
- Does the company mention anything about flexible hours? If you have extra responsibilities at home, like taking care of children or a sick loved one, it is reasonable to expect flexibility from remote jobs.

It doesn't have to be an automatic no-go if you can't find all the information you're looking for in this initial research, especially if you like what you've discovered thus far. Keep those unanswered questions in the back of your mind to potentially ask during an interview.

Updating your resume

When applying for remote positions, understand that employers are looking for candidates who can be productive while working from home, communicate well with team members on collaborative projects, and be flexible enough to overcome the unique challenges that pop up in a remote work environment.

To demonstrate that your skillset makes you the perfect candidate for a remote job, add these keywords and experiences to your resume:

- *Adaptability*
- *Work-from-home experience*
- *Communication skills*
- *Technology proficiency*
- *Self-sufficiency*

Virtual interviews



Let's be real: Interviewing from your own home is way less scary than walking into some unfamiliar office building. But that doesn't mean they're any easier or less important than traditional interviews.

In spring of 2020, 59% of talent acquisition teams were interviewing candidates over video (Cielo).



Each company conducts virtual interviews slightly differently—so you'll need to be ready for anything. Take a deep breath, and keep reading to see how to prepare for it all.

How they compare to in-person interviews

First, let's break down the difference between one-way and live interviews:

- A one-way virtual interview means you will not get to see or converse with an interviewer. You'll record a video of yourself answering a set of questions and send it to the recruiter. Some platforms allow you a set number of takes, giving you the advantage of a redo if needed.
- Live interviews are more similar to the traditional process because you will be talking to someone directly, not recording a video. The interviewer will send you a link to a teleconference platform for interviewing via video chat.

While the format will feel very different from a standard in-person interview, you are still responsible for many of the same key elements. Preparing, dressing professionally, being yourself, and following up after the **interview** are always important.

What hiring managers are looking for

Authenticity

For both one-way and live interviews, come up with a strategy to get yourself to relax in front of the camera: practice with the technology before the meeting, put a post-it reminder to smile on your computer screen, wear those lucky socks, have a solo dance party right before the interview, fiddle with a fidget under the desk. Find what works for you!

How to ace the virtual interview

Practiced responses, but not scripted

It can be tempting to take advantage of the format and have the right words behind the camera. While it's normal to reference your resume or have bulleted notes in front of you during live interviews, don't get carried away. Hiring professionals can tell if you read directly from pre-written, perfect answers.

Professionalism

Professionalism applies to the way you dress, your body language, and your location. Attention to these details demonstrates your preparation and that the interview is important to you.

Should you run into issues with the technology, keep your cool and do your best to problem-solve. Remember everything is an opportunity to demonstrate how you react in a situation – even the pressure of technology glitches!

Don't let this different format distract you from doing your best. Here are some quick tips to help you nail your virtual interviews:

- Practice with the tech. Make sure your microphone, camera, and internet connection are all set up and good to go before the interview.
- Find a clean, well-lit spot where you'll be comfortable and where background noises won't be problematic.
- Maintain eye contact with the camera or interviewer. Avoid looking at your image on the screen or at distractions around the room.
- Speak loudly and clearly without rushing your speech too much.
- Dress professionally (at least from the waist up). If you would feel most confident wearing spiderman pajama pants because it won't show on camera, rock it!
- Prepare thoroughly. Virtual interviews are just as important as in-person ones.
- Be yourself. The best way to connect with the interviewer is to relax and show them your authentic personality.

Virtual onboarding



After acing your interviews and securing a remote job, the next step is virtual onboarding. In your first few weeks, you'll learn all about the processes necessary to your position, meet with colleagues, and start to grasp how the company works.

Like with virtual interviews, each company's virtual onboarding methodology will vary. But no matter the approach, you can be sure that there will be several differences from an in-person experience.

There's even more to learn

Employers know that a successful onboarding experience is essential. You should be able to **trust** that they will train you well – being virtual shouldn't become a barrier to the process.

The Cielo survey found that **41%** of hiring professionals are actually happy to onboard starters virtually. They're ready for this.



Prepare for a lot of information to get thrown your way via video conference, phone call, and screen share. It is on you to be mentally present for all that instruction.

If you forget a detail or need clarification, no one will fault you for asking follow-up questions after onboarding. But put extra effort into retaining the critical pieces of information. Even if you're confident in your memory recall, take notes on what they show you. You don't want to regret not having the info on hand down the line.



Don't be afraid to ask questions! Give yourself five minutes to try and figure it out on your own. If that fails, it is very OK to ask for guidance. It is not a sign of weakness.

Optimizing communication

The biggest hurdle with a remote job is losing the ability to communicate in person. According to **Gensler's Work from Home Survey 2020**, 55% of surveyed U.S. office workers said it's harder to collaborate with others when working remotely.

To optimize communication with your team, approach interactions with high energy and authenticity during onboarding. Even when your only exchanges with co-workers are through a screen, use that to show your personality. The last thing you want is to come across like a robot in the chats.

Also, invest in getting to know your co-workers as individuals. In an office, you would probably stop by someone's desk, introduce yourself, and have a short conversation to break the ice. Why not replicate this virtually? Try reaching out to a co-worker through a direct chat and asking if they have a few minutes for a call or on your next one-on-one call following a project spend a few minutes in normal chatter allowing you to get to know each other.

Overcoming the challenge of remote communication is not a one-and-done sort of situation. While it's imperative to start building relationships early on, these efforts must continue throughout your employment.

Working from home



While a remote job comes with many benefits, there will also be some downsides. If you don't understand and address these potential problems, they can take a toll on your mental and emotional well-being.

Before starting a remote job, be sure to prepare for these common challenges:

Staying focused

There is a different breed of distractions when working from home compared with working in an office. For example, you won't get interrupted by co-workers walking over to your desk, but they might consistently reach out over chat throughout the entire day. And there isn't as much opportunity for petty drama to brew over, but the distractions from your family or roommates can present an entirely new challenge.

The other difficulty? You're in a place usually designated for relaxing. When you fall into the trap of working on your couch or bed, your brain associates that place with downtime, making it tough to reach a productive state of mind.

Making a separate workspace in your home is one of the best things you can do to stay focused during the workday. Try to reduce clutter and make a rule for yourself that you won't look at social media when you're in that space. This establishes a distinction between work and home and reminds your housemates when you're working.

Another key to staying focused is taking intentional breaks. At the very least, your mental and physical well-being will thank you for getting up and stretching your legs every hour. Sometimes finding these pauses can disturb your workflow, but stepping away from a project will improve your stamina and productivity in the long run.

Dealing with isolation

The biggest drawback of working from home is missing out on in-person interactions with co-workers. It is not worthwhile to shut yourself away to get the work done if you don't invest in connecting with others.

Talk with your team throughout the day. It can be about work if you don't know what else to discuss, but also feel free to share fun facts you've learned recently or exciting news from your personal life. Human connection is crucial for your well-being.

Online chat is one of the most convenient ways to stay connected. But making time for phone calls and video chats can be even more rewarding. If a daily conversation isn't possible at your remote job, consider initiating a virtual happy hour once a week. Even something that small can make a world of difference.

Switching off

It is harder to disconnect from the workday when there is no 30-minute commute home. All it takes to 'leave the office' is getting out of a chair. In 2017, researchers **Alan Felstead and Golo Henseke** confirmed that a blurred line between home and work increases the inability to switch off and unwind at the end of the day. In fact, 29% of remote workers in a **2019 Airtasker survey** revealed that they had a hard time maintaining a healthy work-life balance, while just 23% of office workers reported the same struggle.

In the absence of traveling home, find another activity to trigger your mind into understanding it's time to exit your working mode. This commute substitute should be something you enjoy and can do every day.

It will look a little different for everyone, but here are some ideas for activities that may help you switch off from work:



- Taking a walk
- Shutting down your laptop and putting it out of sight for the rest of the evening
- Spending time with family
- Calling a friend
- Cooking
- Watching a TV show
- Working on a hobby
- Doing yoga/stretching

Undoubtedly there is a lot involved when it comes to transitioning to the remote from home job search and work-era. But having the necessary information handy will help with securing a remote job, and allow you to move forward into the work-from-home era fully prepared and confident.