



working for everyone

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How-to Guide | **Knowing your skills**

Use this guide to help you:

- Understand different types of skills
- Identify the skills that you have
- Recognise the skills an employer is looking for
- See how your skills match their requirements
- Explore options for improving your skills or learning new skills

Step 1 | **Understand different types of skills**

Skills fall into two categories:

1. **Hard skills** – job or industry skills gained from experience or training (sometimes called technical skills)
2. **Soft skills** – skills that are general and are useful in many different jobs or industries (these are sometimes called transferable or employability skills)

Common soft skills that are valued by employers include communication, teamwork, problem solving, planning, organising, self-management, learning and technology skills.

Step 2 | **Identify the skills you have**

Our **Working it out Tool** will help you to identify your key skills. You can also:

- ✓ Collect advertisements for jobs similar to your previous roles and look at the skills that they ask for
- ✓ Reflect on tasks or work achievements in your past jobs. Think about what skills helped you to do those tasks or achieve those results
- ✓ Reflect on skills you use in your personal life. Consider things like your hobbies, interests, or involvement in community or sporting groups

- ✓ Ask past colleagues or managers to identify your best skills and attributes
- ✓ Look at training.gov.au and identify the competencies (skills) in the training packages for your industry or occupation
- ✓ Use the **skills checklist** in this guide to add to your list

Step 3 | **Focus on the skills employers are looking for**

Build a list of skills, qualifications, personal characteristics and experience that employers are looking for in your field.

To help you:

- ✓ Collect advertisements for the type of job you want and make a list of the skills and knowledge they are asking for
- ✓ Use our [Exploring the Australian job market](#) guide in our [additional resources](#) to learn about different industries and the skills they require
- ✓ Search [Google](#) for job descriptions in your field

Skills checklist

Food preparation	Personal care
Numerical, financial, statistical	Finance and accounting
Writing, editing	Budgeting, calculating
Creating, designing	Cash management
Planning and scheduling	Word processing
Assembling, constructing	Desktop publishing
Diagnosing	Security
Language skills	Maintenance
Inventing	Records and file management
Repairing	Customer service
Analysis and research	Payroll
Selling and promotion	Recruitment
Physical coordination, agility	Research and development
Servicing or fixing equipment	Quality control
Project coordination	Machine operation
Managing change	Adapting to change
Building morale	Cultural sensitivity
Coaching and mentoring	Conflict resolution
Supervising	Networking
Instructing others	Presentation skills
Developing people	Interviewing
Directing people	Developing plans
Handling stress	Coordinating events
Teamwork	Continuous improvement
Reliability	Personal presentation
Inventory management	Giving feedback
Purchasing	Report writing
MYOB	Motivating others
Microsoft Office	Collecting information
Multi-tasking	Applying technical knowledge
Safety knowledge	Contractor liaison

Step 4 | **Identify how your skills match their requirements**

The type of job transition you are making will determine the skills and knowledge you will take to your next role. Are you seeking a similar job, a different job in the same industry, or making a complete career change? In all cases, you should try to match your skills as closely as possible to what an employer is looking for.

If you're returning to the workforce, consider the 'Different job, different industry' approach.

**Same job
Same industry**

e.g. Clerical Worker/Manufacturing

Your marketable skills

- Hard (technical) skills
- Industry knowledge
- Soft (transferable) skills

**Same job
Different industry**

e.g. Clerical Worker/Government

Your marketable skills

- Hard (technical) skills
- Soft (transferable) skills

**Different job
Same industry**

e.g. Quality Control/Manufacturing

Your marketable skills

- Soft (transferable) skills
- Industry knowledge

**Different job
Different industry**

e.g. Massage Therapist

Your marketable skills

- Soft (transferable) skills

Use the following table to list your skills beside what an employer is looking for.

	What the employer wants	What I have
Hard skills <i>Technical skills</i>		
Soft skills <i>Transferable skills</i>		
Industry knowledge		

Step 5 | **Explore options for upskilling or re-skilling**

Gaining new skills can often help with a job search. You may be eligible for subsidised training or other training incentives. For instance, the Victorian Training Guarantee will subsidise training for people who don't hold a post-school qualification, or want to gain a higher qualification.

There are four main ways that you can increase your skills:

- **Vocational educational and training (VET)** provides workplace-specific skills and knowledge through their training programs (from Certificate 1 through to Advanced Diploma level).
 - myskills.gov.au is an online database of vocational education and training options
 - training.gov.au provides information on nationally recognised training packages
- **Volunteer work** – Volunteering is a great way to increase your skills. Contact your local Volunteer Resource Centre or access websites like [Go Volunteer](#) to find out about opportunities. Some non-for-profit organisations also recruit for paid positions from their volunteer workforce.

- **Higher education** –Universities and TAFEs offer undergraduate degrees and higher qualifications.
- **Adult traineeship or apprenticeship.** This is a form of skills development that combines paid employment with training.
 - Australianapprenticeships.gov.au provides information on apprenticeships and traineeships
 - matureageapprenticeships.org provides specific information on mature age apprenticeships

Most of Australia’s employment growth over the past five years has been in occupations that require post-school qualifications, either from the higher education or VET sectors.

Handy hints

Remember that you’re demonstrating your skills at all stages of the recruitment process, not just when you have a job and are working.

Being on time, speaking confidently and describing your values and achievements at interviews are excellent ways to show your skills.

Find related guides on our resources page

www.workingforeveryone.com/resources

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