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Acclimating after you take that new job

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The look: Creating a good first impression at your new job is important to how you're perceived by your new colleagues and managers, and you can do so by understanding the team dynamics of your new workplace, getting to work early, and dressing professionally. / Careerbuilder

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After tireless months of searching for a new job, your hard work has paid off. You've accepted a job offer, and you're ready to start. But once the thrill of success wears off, reality hits: You've got a new job to start! A new boss to impress, new co-workers to befriend, new responsibilities to handle, ... you're about to immerse yourself into a totally unfamiliar experience. As exciting as it all is, starting a new job is also more than a little nerve-wracking. There's a lot riding on the first impression you make at your office.

Want to start your job off on the right foot? Here's how.

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1. Watch and learn. As the new guy, you'll be tempted to jump right in and prove yourself to your new boss and co-workers. But, while it's important to establish yourself as a valuable asset to the team, "if you don't understand the team dynamics or have enough context, you'll be like a bull in a china shop," says Jessica Coleman, a learning and development consultant at Employers Resource Association, a human resources help center for small businesses.

"The time you spend asking questions and listening can save you from embarrassment, but also allows you to know what success looks like so you can hit the ground running in the right direction."

2. Get there early for a while. On your first day, get to the office about 10 minutes before you're scheduled to be there. Then, once you're familiar with what time everyone else gets in, try to be one of the first people in for a while. This will show that you're eager to learn your new role.

"Arrive early and stay late. Don't be a clock watcher. Your boss will notice," says Diane Gottsman, etiquette expert and owner of The Protocol School of Texas.

3. Get the logistics down. In addition to acclimating to your new position, boss and colleagues, your first days on the job are also when you set up your voicemail and order supplies. Introducing yourself to the office manager or person who handles supplies and logistical issues will save you the hassle of trying to figure out all of these things on your own, says Roy Cohen, author of "The Wall Street Professional's Survival Guide."

"This is a key person to get to know, a person who can either let you figure things out on your own or facilitate your entry into the organization with shortcuts and knowledge to ease the transition," Cohen says. Don't have an office manager? Ask a colleague whom the best person is to address these issues.

4. Don't try to change everything. If your new job is a management role, make sure you spend time with your team to feel out the dynamic and different personalities before you propose any major shifts in the paradigm.

"Many times, a new manager will come into an organization and try to make a bunch of changes without having enough context or understanding of the organization," Coleman says. "This can lead to resistance, and can cause significant or irreparable damage to trust and morale."

5. Dress the part. If you didn't get a sense for the dress code during your interview, err on the side of dressing up for the first few days. "Then, after your first week, treat yourself to a few new outfits that fall in line with what is acceptable for your office," says Katy Keogh, a principal in the financial contracts division at staffing firm

Winter, Wyman.

6. Give a proper introduction. Most likely, your boss will introduce you to the rest of your department. However, if you bump into someone you haven't met, make the introduction yourself.

"Don't wait for employees to introduce themselves to you. Whenever there is an opportunity, extend your hand and introduce yourself," Gottsman says.

7. Check in. After you've been there for a month or two, set up a time with your manager to discuss your progress.

"Ask for constructive feedback on your performance and set goals for what you will do in the coming months," Keogh says. "Regular check-ins are key to taking the temperature of your manager and how he or she feels about you."

Kaitlin Madden is a writer and blogger for CareerBuilder.com and its job blog, www.TheWorkBuzz.com.

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