

Make sure your CV is working hard for you.

Your CV is a route to new opportunities. In itself, your CV won't get you a new job, but well written, allied to a thoughtful marketing strategy, it will open doors previously closed and give you access to people who may be able to help you find new positions of interest.

The objective of your CV is to get people interested in you. Don't get caught out by including every detail of your life and career: detail can be covered when you're in a face-to-face interview.

There are no rules for CV writing in most countries, but here are some things I'd absolutely recommend you include:

- Start with your **Contact Details**. Ensure your email address and mobile number are included and prominent.
- Next, outline a **Personal Summary**. This will give the reader real headlines about you (make claims you can justify later in the document). You can include your ambitions here as this suggests a sense of purpose - just keep them relevant and realistic.
- Follow that with a **Skills and Experience Summary**. This should include the skills you've acquired and used, as well as an outline of any formally trained skills that might be relevant.
- Then comes an **Achievements Summary**. List the 5 or 6 things you are most proud of and quantify and date them. Show the reader you can get things done.
- Your **Career Details** need to come next. I'd suggest you list these by date (starting with the most recent first), company name, position held and town name, but don't eat space with the address. I'd list, say, the most recent six jobs then tail that with an outline of your work experience in one entry. Try to make it look like you've had a career plan rather than a haphazard series of jobs.
- You can add **Personal Interests** if you wish, but only if they give the reader an extra insight into your personality.

If you can keep to this list within 3 pages, that's ideal. If it's longer than 4 pages, edit it with the help of a friend or colleague you trust. Too much detail can make the author appear dull and uninspiring.

Then get your CV out on the web. Monster can be a good place to start for any job seeker at any level, but there are many others you can identify with a little internet research.

TOP 10 CV “DO’S”

1. **DO use spellchecker!!!** Far too many CV’s have too many spelling mistakes.
2. **DO make your contact details prominent** - make it as easy as possible for people to get to you.
3. **DO make sure you describe and quantify your work SKILLS.**
4. **DO make sure you describe and quantify your work EXPERIENCE.**
5. **DO make sure you describe and quantify your ACHIEVEMENTS.**
6. **DO be clear about your ambitions.**
7. **DO post your CV on the Internet.** Sites such as www.monster.co.uk and www.samheadhunting.co.uk will make you instantly available to people looking for you - and they will respect your confidentiality.
8. **DO make a conscious attempt to design the layout** - Clear headings and deliberate white space form a key part of design - it will help you stand out.
9. **DO personalise your CV** for specific job applications.
10. **DO check that your career dates work accurately.**

TOP 10 CV “DON’TS

1. **DON’T use comic sans as your font of choice** - you won’t get as far as first base!
2. **DON’T make your CV too long** - 17 pages of tight text will stop you getting an interview. 3 pages are about right.
3. **DON’T cram in too much detail** - It will serve to confuse.
4. **DON’T circulate your CV without asking a friend** (with opinions you trust) to give you honest feedback.
5. **DON’T lie.** If you’re not sure - leave it out!
6. **DON’T go longer than 3 months without checking your CV is updated.**
7. **DON’T assume headhunters like me read CV’s at length** - we read what grabs us.
8. **DON’T assume at interview that the interviewer has memorised every detail in your CV** - they won’t.
9. **DON’T leave out your contact details to protect your confidentiality** - you will not be in the same job in 10 years.
10. **DON’T circulate your CV without making specific changes for each audience.** With modern software it’s easy to change and adapt - you can be certain that other job seekers will be doing just that.