**Six ways to stay positive during your health care job search**

Spending quality time with friends and family is one of six ways to ease job search stress.

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Anticipation and excitement are some of the emotions that come with a job search in health care, including at VA. A new career comes with fresh growth opportunities, stimulating challenges and, in the case of VA employment, the chance to meet and care for Veterans of all service eras.

Yet job searches can be stressful. That’s especially true if the process takes longer than you expected. Here are six ways to stay positive while looking for a new health care career:

1. **Update your application materials.**

Being proactive about your search can help bolster your confidence. While investigating new opportunities, carefully comb over your resume and look for ways to make it stronger.

Does it need a new layout or some editing? Review [VA’s resume-building guide](https://www.vaforvets.va.gov/docs/Resume_Building_Guide_01062012.pdf) or search reputable job-seeking sites like [The Muse](https://www.themuse.com/advice/-) for resume-writing tips and tricks. The [Veteran Employment Services Office](https://www.vaforvets.va.gov/vaforvets/) also links to numerous free resources for creating a winning job application and resume. Or you can hire a professional resume-writing service.

1. **Volunteer your time.**

While it might be tempting to sit on the couch ready with a game console or binge-worthy TV show, excess screen time [may affect sleep quality](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/tech-happy-life/201812/how-much-screen-time-is-too-much) or pose a risk for [depression](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/cooccurring/sleep_problems_vets.asp).

Instead, spend time volunteering in your community. Not only does volunteering look great on your resume, it keeps you connected to others and makes a positive social impact. You can even apply to [volunteer at VA](https://www.volunteer.va.gov/), exploring and fulfilling your passions while serving our nation’s heroes.

1. **Practice**

The benefits of a meditation practice are [well documented](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24395196), some of which include stress reduction and improved well-being. More good news: You don’t need to set aside a large chunk of time to take advantage of these benefits. In fact, practicing for as little as [10 minutes a day](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3277272/) can reap large rewards.

Not sure where or how to start? Apps like [VA’s Mindfulness Coach](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/mindfulcoach_app.asp) and [Moving Forward](https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/movingforward/index.asp) or the free [UCLA Mindful](https://www.uclahealth.org/ucla-mindful) can help you dial down job search angst.

1. **Reach out to family and friends.**

Your support system is in place for times like these! When you’re feeling uncertain or anxious, pick up the phone or schedule some time with friends and loved ones. Grabbing a cup of coffee, watching a movie or just sharing your feelings with someone who cares can be an invaluable mental health tool. And don’t forget your furry friends — spending [quality time with your pets](https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2018/02/power-pets) can help reduce stress and anxiety.

1. **Get physical.**

When you’re wrapped up in your job hunt, it can be easy to overlook your physical health. But [exercise is an incredible mood booster](https://www.research.va.gov/currents/0418-Older-Veterans-with-PTSD-take-part-in-exercise-program.cfm) and confidence builder. Just 15 minutes of physical activity a day — like taking a brisk walk — has been found to [enhance people’s moods](https://www.apa.org/monitor/2011/12/exercise) and even [reduce the risk](https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/more-evidence-that-exercise-can-boost-mood) of major depression.

1. **Eat your veggies.**

[Nutrition](https://www.nutrition.va.gov/) is an important factor in not only your physical health, but your mental health as well. [Drinking plenty of water](https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/nutritional-psychiatry-your-brain-on-food-201511168626), cutting down on refined sugars and supplementing your diet with [leafy green veggies](https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/60256/healthy-eating-age/), fruit and fermented foods (like sauerkraut and pickles) can battle inflammation and oxidative stress while improving your mental outlook.

**Choose VA today**

Ready to start the job search for a rewarding new career? Take a closer look at what VA can offer and apply today.

* LEARN more about the VA [hiring process](https://www.vacareers.va.gov/ApplicationProcess/NavigatingHiringProcess/) and the [benefits of a VA career](https://www.vacareers.va.gov/Benefits/EmploymentBenefits/).
* SEARCH by keyword for an [open position](https://www.vacareers.va.gov/) near you or view careers by [location](https://www.vacareers.va.gov/#locations).
* FOLLOW VA Careers on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/vacareers), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/vacareers), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/vacareers/), [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=VA+Careers), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/department-of-veterans-affairs/)and [Glassdoor](https://www.glassdoor.com/Overview/Working-at-US-Department-of-Veterans-Affairs-EI_IE41429.11,44.htm).
* CHOOSE VA at [VAcareers.va.gov](http://www.vacareers.va.gov/).