

# Staying positive if you have relocated overseas and cannot work



Moving overseas with your significant other and being unable to work due to restrictions in your new location can be tough for some people to deal with. While one half of a couple is experiencing a new and exciting career opportunity, the other is having to make the adjustment to a new home-based way of living.

Sadly, this can also lead to mental stress. Culture shock, isolation and lack of a regular routine can lead to loneliness, loss of identity and lack of purpose, which can result in unhappiness and relationship problems, and in worse cases bring on anxiety and depression.

But it doesn't necessarily need to be this way, and if you are relocating overseas as a 'trailing partner', there is still a lot you can do to make the move a positive and fulfilling experience.



# 1.

## Start with a positive mindset - go from 'trailing' to 'thriving'

The traditional concept of trailing spouse or trailing partner implies a negative. Don't let that be what defines you. See yourself as someone who has been given a unique opportunity to create the new life that you want to live. You are facing a new experience that is to be enjoyed, not feared.



# 2.

## Understand the pros and cons before you leave

Discuss as a family why the move is happening and what to expect. There are so many great opportunities overseas for all the family but you also need to be realistic and include potential negatives.

Your partner likely has a lot of work-related plans that are keeping them occupied, but it is equally important that they are fully aware of the impact the relocation may have on you.



# 3. Give yourself enough time to adjust

Moving overseas is overwhelming for everyone, regardless of whether you are working or not. A new country can mean dealing with a new language, a new culture and new ways of doing things. On top of that there are the practicalities you will

have to deal with - everything from setting up new bank accounts to navigating the local healthcare system. Give yourself the time needed to get settled, and then you can start thinking about how to make the best of your new situation.

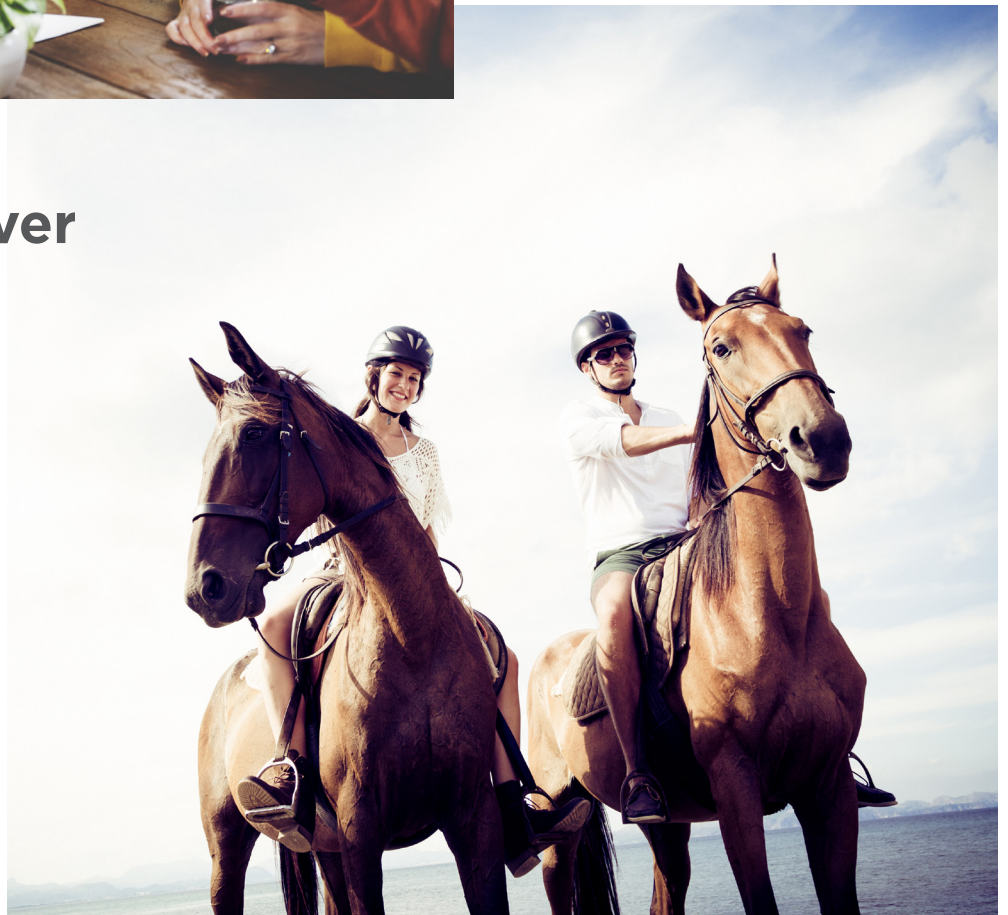


# 4. Network and find like-minded people

As a non-working partner, you most definitely will not be alone, as many more will be facing the same restrictions. Reach out and connect - it can be a huge help to talk with others who have gone through what you are going through. It can also benefit you to create your own social circles outside those of your partner. Network with the expat community or go online to find formal and informal support groups.

# 5. Rediscover yourself

Look at the positives of having more time to yourself - for example, new or rekindled hobbies. This is a great opportunity to feel in control again and do some of the things you've always told yourself you would do, if only you had enough time. This could be new sports or hobbies, language lessons, and much, much more. Getting involved in a sports club or similar can also help with meeting new people.





## 6. Keep your CV fresh through training or education

Having restrictions on work does not mean that your professional life is put on hold. There are many ways to stay busy and keep your resume updated. Many expat partners take the opportunity to return to college or university – for example to study for a master’s degree. Distance learning also means you can access training directly related to your career. Another option could be to take on volunteer work – either in a field where you already have experience or in a totally new area.

## 7.

### Consider the legality of other work options

Depending on the country you are aiming to live in, it may be possible to take on freelance distance work or even potentially start up your own business, especially given the new ways of working we have seen since the pandemic. Speak with your employer before you leave and check the legality of these options in your new host country.

## 8. Communicate openly with your partner and other family

If you do start to have concerns and are experiencing any negative thoughts and feelings, don’t keep them to yourself. Maybe you are starting to think that maybe moving overseas was the wrong decision. Or

perhaps feeling resentful toward your partner and the life they are living? Speak regularly with your partner and other family members to help prevent problems escalating into something more serious.

