

Moving Out on *Your Own*



Preparing for Independence | Finding a Place to Live
Moving In and Getting Settled | Solving Common Problems

Preparing for Independence

Turning 18 makes someone an adult in the legal sense. But being an adult involves much more than age. Adults have the knowledge and skills to live on their own. They also make their own decisions and accept responsibility for what they decide—no matter the **consequences**. Can you do these things? Are you ready to be an independent adult?



It Takes More Than Planning

Derek has never been a morning person. Throughout high school, he struggled to get to school on time. Many mornings, he slept right through his alarm. Then his dad would try to wake him. It usually took him three or four trips into Derek's room before Derek would get out of bed.

By the fourth trip, Derek's dad would be mad. "You're 18 years old!" he'd remind his son. "You need to start acting like an adult."

Derek already thinks of himself as an adult. After all, he will be graduating from high school in two weeks. In the fall, he plans on going to the local community college. He hasn't talked to anyone at the college yet about being admitted. But he is pretty sure he'll get in.

Over the summer, Derek works full-time doing landscaping. His employer expects him to be at the job site by 7:00 a.m. Most days, he manages to get up on time. His coworker Jack picks him up. Derek knows that if he isn't ready, Jack will leave without him.



When summer ends, Derek plans on moving into a house with Jack and a few other guys from work. He's been spending a lot of time there and looks forward to moving in. But first he needs to save enough money for his share of the rent and **utilities**.

Derek is making good money at his landscaping job. He loves that his employer pays him in cash. That means Derek doesn't need to have a checking account. Somehow, though, he always seems to run out of money before his next payday. Because of this, Derek is considering asking his dad to help him pay rent.



Chapter 1

Knowledge and Skills Checklists

Most young people are eager to become independent adults. But what does it take to make it on your own in today's world?

One way to judge how ready you are is to **inventory** your **competencies**. Think about the current level of your knowledge and skills. What additional knowledge do you need? Which basic skills require more development?

Complete the following checklists. They'll help you see how far you've come—and how far you need to go—along the path to successful adulthood.



General Knowledge and Skills

Review the following list of **essential** knowledge and skills. For each item, rate your ability level from 1 (needs improvement) to 5 (skill mastered). Be honest.

I do this . . .				
Not so well			Very well	
1	2	3	4	5

I've developed the ability to . . .

_____ 1. balance my wants and needs.

_____ 2. work hard for what I want.

_____ 3. manage my money.

_____ 4. express myself clearly.

_____ 5. make wise decisions.

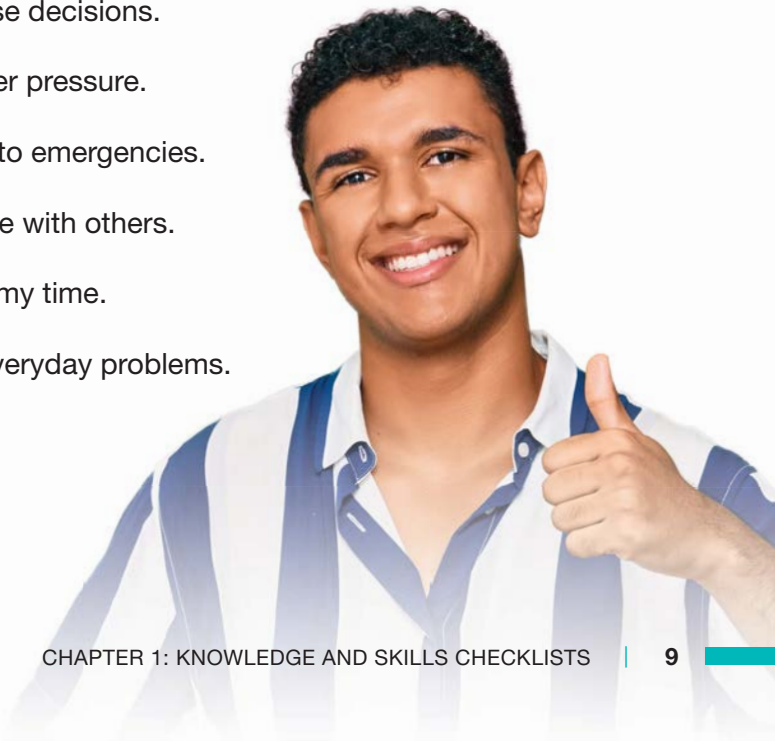
_____ 6. resist peer pressure.

_____ 7. respond to emergencies.

_____ 8. cooperate with others.

_____ 9. manage my time.

_____ 10. solve everyday problems.



Tips for Resisting Peer Pressure

- **Choose friends who influence you in positive ways.** True friends will respect your values and decisions.
- **Think in advance about what a specific situation might involve.** Avoid people, places, and activities that could lead to uncomfortable choices.
- **Make decisions that fit your values.** Stick with your decisions no matter what others do.
- **Consider the possible consequences of your behavior.** Is there a chance you could get in trouble? Could you get hurt or harm your health?
- **Practice ways to say no.** Tell the truth. If that's difficult, make up an excuse. Be sure you aren't going along with something just because it's easier than telling people no.



Work on Your Social Skills

Social skills are the behaviors that help people get along and communicate well with others.

Key social skills include the following:

- being polite and friendly
- controlling anger
- resolving conflicts
- apologizing and accepting responsibility
- compromising



Having good social skills will help you be successful in everything you do. Social skills are important with your friends, family, and coworkers. They also help you interact with people you don't know.

To develop your social skills, work on these things:

- knowing what to say and when to say it
- listening effectively to others
- understanding body language and unspoken signals
- knowing how to behave in different situations





Specific Knowledge and Skills

Review the following list of specific knowledge and skills. For each item, identify your competency by writing Y for “Yes” or N for “No.”

I know how to . . .

- _____ 1. take care of my health.
- _____ 2. cook simple meals.
- _____ 3. write a **resume**.
- _____ 4. manage a checking account.
- _____ 5. dress properly for different occasions.
- _____ 6. investigate job opportunities.
- _____ 7. use the library and internet to find information.
- _____ 8. prepare for a job interview.
- _____ 9. create and stick to a **budget**.

- ___ 10. schedule an appointment.
- ___ 11. make simple home repairs.
- ___ 12. use public transportation.
- ___ 13. write a business letter.
- ___ 14. fill out forms properly.
- ___ 15. get information from maps, charts, and graphs.
- ___ 16. take care of my clothes.
- ___ 17. understand and follow directions.
- ___ 18. apply for a driver's license.
- ___ 19. get legal help.
- ___ 20. register to vote.

