


## CLASS OF NOW: Reasons to Go Back to School

Many of us think of our school days fondly, often for reasons that have little to do with our classroom experience. We think of football games, band concerts, drama productions, dances, or parties. However, these events and occasions have something in common with the mere classroom time we seem to forget: they all brought us together with our fellow students.

These memories of people coming together can remind us of a good reason to return to our education. Often, the process of growing older can isolate us from each other. Taking classes, particularly at local community colleges, can bring interaction with all sorts of interesting people. In this way, going back to school - the sheer act of going - can invigorate a life by coming together with like-minded others.

Did you know that taking a class in just about any subject can improve your cognitive abilities, rejuvenate your memory, and have fun all at the same time? Recent scientific studies clearly show that senior citizens who stay mentally active enjoy all of these rewards.

Challenging our brains to grow new cells can take place at any age. For that matter, we can build new connections which help our problem-solving abilities as well as memory. The more the brain is used, the better it grows and functions.

So, what are you waiting for? Contact the admissions department of the institution you desire to attend to discuss your needs and goals. 

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## 6 Job-Hunting Tips for Older Workers

Whether it's for personal satisfaction or financial need, many retirees and future retirees want to work in retirement. In a poll of over 3,000 business professionals conducted by RetiredBrains.com in 2010, more than 86% said they plan to continue working once they are retired.

But employment for older workers isn't always easy to come by. Americans aged 55 and over experience an average unemployment duration of 52.7 weeks, according to a July 2011 survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. That's up over 160% since December 2007 when the average duration of unemployment for these workers was only 20.2 weeks.

The job-hunting tips below were developed as a result of feedback from hundreds of older job seekers who helped RetiredBrains develop them. Try them. They work!

1. Look for temporary or project assignments as they are much more available than fulltime jobs. Executives, managers and professionals can often use their current skill sets and experience to work on projects where their background works for them and also for the employers that hire them on this basis. There are many employers interested in hiring on a project basis as in most cases employers do not have to pay benefits for these kinds of jobs and even more importantly an employer can terminate a project based worker with little or no warning and little expense.

Register with temp firms in your local area as they are less concerned with age and are more interested in your skills and experience. Their interview process will give you interviewing experience. Also if you get work through a temp firm, even if it is not the kind of job you are seeking, it helps build your resume for future work assignments.

2. When applying for a job tell the employer you are willing to work on a project or temporary basis. This often gives you a leg up on younger workers who are often unwilling to accept employment that does not include benefits. Temporary employment can lead to full-time work.

3. Volunteer with a charity or non-profit. Although in most cases there is little or no monetary compensation it is good experience and can possibly lead to employment with a firm that is seeking that particular experience or appreciates your work ethic. It is also easier to find employment while you are working/volunteering as you have a better mind set during interviews. Looking for a job on a full-time basis is not a very rewarding experience and frame of mind is more important that you realize.
4. Consider having your resume re-written or updated by an expert as the resume you used years ago is no longer appropriate. You should have your resume on your computer so you can modify it highlighting the experience most appropriate for the employer and job to which you are applying. A single general resume for all interviews is not the best way to get hired.
5. Get information on the perspective employer prior to your interview. For example contact someone who works for this employer who attended the same school you went to saying, "Hi. You and I went to the same school but graduated at different times. I'm interviewing for a position with your firm later this week and, before I meet with the hiring manager, I would like to test out a couple questions I have about the firm on you and see what you think the answers might be." Research the employer on Google or Yahoo.
6. Search for a job on job boards that specifically connect older workers with employers seeking to hire them and post your resume on these sites. The search and resume posts are free. Set a job alert to notify you if a position is posted that matches your skills, experience and geographic preferences. Some job boards specializing in older workers:

- RetiredBrains.com
- RetirementJobs.com
- Workforce50.com
- SeniorJobBank.com
- Seniors4Hire.com 

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