

## Escape Your Location: How to Become Free From the Office

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Nothing happens unless first a dream. - Carl Sandburg

Ever wanted to escape from the confines of your location, and be do your work from anywhere in the world?

That's been my dream, especially this year (see my full-time blogger plea). Be able to move anywhere I want and still do the work I'm passionate about. Join me!



Photo by [visualpanic](#)

Why would someone want to make becoming a “[Location-Independent Professional](#)” one of their top goals? Well, the reasons vary for every person, but just a few good reasons:

1. **You can travel.** Who doesn't love to travel? Well, some people might not, but being able to see the world is a desire of many people (myself included). Free yourself from location, and you can take mini-vacations (or working vacations).
2. **You can live in new places.** Why must you live where you live? Is it possible to live in the Caribbean, in South America, in Europe, in Japan, in Southeast Asia, on Guam? No doubt, if achieve independence.
3. **No boss breathing down your neck.** I don't know about you, but bosses can be a pain in the neck (present company excluded). I can live without them.
4. **Set your own hours.** Yes, this is the part I love. Some companies have a fixation on 8-5, but I like to work early and leave early, and others like to burn the midnight oil. Still others prefer to work in chunks, or not work at all for awhile and then pull all-nighters. Why should one schedule be preferred to another? As long as the work gets done, that's all that matters.
5. **Freedom.** All of the above items talk about freedom in some way, but I thought I should mention it here because freedom really means freedom in every way, not just those mentioned above. Freedom to choose the kind of computer you use, the outfit you wear, freedom to choose what you work on.

There are many drawbacks, of course — from greater expenses to less security to all the problems of administering a business and more — but for some of us, the opportunities and freedom of being free from an office have too great an appeal to let those drawbacks stand in our way.

### Options for Freedom

One of the great things about being free of the office is that it doesn't just come in one flavor. There are about as many options as there are people who have this goal. Some of the main varieties include (but aren't limited to):

- **Freelancer.** I do a lot of this. And it can be done by many different professions.
- **Blogger.** I also do a lot of this. Be warned, however, that the revenues for bloggers are usually not huge, especially for the first year. I've been lucky enough to get some decent traffic in my first year, but most blogs don't earn very much. It's more likely to be a source of side income than your main source of income.
- **Small business owner.** Have a small business? It's possible to run it remotely. Sure, you might not make as much money as you would running it hands-on, but it's a matter of priorities: do you want growth, or freedom? If you want freedom, you open up some interesting options, especially if you automate it.
- **Consultant.** I've thought about this option, and it works for a lot of people in a lot of different fields. Similar to freelancing.
- **Contractor.** Overlaps quite a bit with the title of "consultant" or "freelancer" but there are different options in this area too.
- **Salesperson.** If you sell stuff, you don't need to go door-to-door anymore. There are other methods you can explore.
- **Online businessman.** If you create a totally virtual business, your physical location doesn't matter.
- **Telecommuter.** This can work for many regular employees. The key: you have to be so valuable to your boss that he will allow you the freedom to work from home (or from wherever). And you have to be dependable and able to self-manage.
- **Create a product.** Create a product that you can sell online. It takes a big initial investment of time and energy, but once you've got the ball rolling and the sales are flowing, it's mostly maintenance work from then on.
- **Speaker or seminar-holder.** Travel from city to city to speak or conduct seminars about whatever you're an expert at.

## Tips

So how do you achieve this dream? Just as there are many options for becoming free from the office, there are many routes to getting there. I can't lay out a blueprint for you, but I can share some things I'm learning along the way and some things I've learned from others doing the same thing. These are not tips that will work for everyone — they're ideas, things that work for some people, and things to consider.

**1. Dare to dream.** The thing that holds most people back is that they don't allow themselves to dream. Sure, it might be a passing fantasy, but they don't give their dreams a serious thought. But what's to stop you? Money? Fear? Overcome those measly little obstacles and allow yourself to dream.

**2. Discover your passion.** Many times, it's not enough to just do a job from wherever you please — it's best if it's a job you love to do. I've written about this before (Finding Your Passion the 10th habit in [Zen To Done](#)), but I think many of us get stuck in a job just because it's what we've been doing ... without thinking about whether it's something we love to do. This year, I've discovered I'm passionate about blogging, about writing, and I'm working to turn this passion into the way I make my living. More [here](#) and [here](#).

**3. Do your research.** Read about how others have achieved this dream, what steps they took to get there, and what their lives are like now. A great source is Lea Woodward's new e-book, "[X Marks the Spot](#)". It's a great read, full of information on how to achieve this independence, written by someone who is actually living the dream. I highly recommend it. [Buy it here](#).

**4. Explore your options.** What are the various routes available to you to get to your dream? Keep your mind open to opportunities, to new ways of doing things you're good at doing, or that you love doing. Think about ways to add income streams into your life, instead of relying on a single income stream. Look at ideas that others are implementing successfully, and see if those are good options for you. In the early stages, it can be useful to look into many more options than you're actually going to choose in the end ... and even give a few of them a try to see if they might work for you. See these blogs, to start with, for ideas: [Location Independent](#), [Rat Race Escape Artist](#), and [Escape from Cubicle Nation](#).

**5. Lay out a plan.** Once you've begun exploring your options, you can start laying out a roadmap to get to your dream. Now, understand that this roadmap will change as you go along — think of it as a living document rather than anything set in stone. You're exploring new territory ... it only makes sense that you'll discover new things, learn as you go, change your mind about some things, and find new options you didn't even know existed. But the key is to write your plan down ... so you have a guide to keep you on track.

**6. Consider a gradual transition.** J.D. Roth from [Get Rich Slowly](#) (he's one of my biggest inspirations for becoming a blogger by the way) did an awesome post about [taking the plunge and pursuing his dream](#). While the entire post was great, one of the things I loved about his plan is the gradual transition. J.D. isn't just quitting his day job all at once. He's weaning himself from the job one day at a time, over the course of a year. This gives him the chance to adjust to all the changes of quitting his job. While you're considering your options, you might consider this one.

**7. Take action.** It's all well and good to make a plan, and to allow yourself to dream, and to consider options and all that — these are necessary steps — but the best-laid plans sitting on a shelf don't do us much good. You gotta take action. Today. Don't put it off until next month or next year ... do something today to get yourself closer to reality. Then tomorrow, do another thing. One step at a time, you'll get the ball rolling, and you'll get there eventually. But without that first step, you'll get nowhere.

**8. Reduce your needs.** This isn't a necessary step, but it's a good option to consider. Lea Woodward, in the above-mentioned e-book "[X Marks the Spot](#)", says that while she and her husband did reduce expenses, they tried to avoid a "scarcity mentality" ... which I think is an interesting idea. But the truth is, if you don't have as many expenses, you don't need as much of an income ... and that means that your dream is much easier to implement. My favorite book on this is [Your Money or Your Life](#), one of the most amazing personal-finance and life-changing books you can read. YMOYL shows us how each purchase and each expense represents a cost to us in terms of our life ... we must work a certain number of hours for everything we buy and spend on. That's something worth thinking about ... are you willing to work extra hours for the things you buy and spend your money on, or would you rather use those hours doing other things?

**9. Simplify your work.** This, of course, is one of the great themes of Zen Habits (to start with: [one](#), [two](#), [three](#), [four](#), [five](#), [six](#)) ... but it is especially relevant here. If you want to work on your own, and liberate yourself from the office, you'd be wise to simplify what you do. Eliminate the non-essential tasks, streamline your workflow, focus on the tasks and project and clients with the absolute biggest potential and long-term benefits.

**10. Outsource and automate.** One of my biggest sources of inspiration, Tim Ferriss' excellent book [The 4-Hour work Week](#), gives you some great tips on how to eliminate the non-essential and focus on what matters most. But some of the most interesting parts of the book are the sections on outsourcing your life and automating your business. Those parts alone could have been a separate book. They're not something that everyone will want to implement, but they're most definitely interesting options that can help many people achieve their dreams.

**This, of course, is an incomplete guide. Many of the sources I linked to will help you with more details and ideas ... but I'd like to hear from you guys. Anyone working on this dream, or already living it? What are your tips? Share in the comments.**

***Note:** some of the links in this post are affiliate links. If you buy these products through these links, Zen Habits will get a share of the purchase (support the site!). However, I'd also like to note that I don't link to products that I don't fully endorse, that I haven't read, or that I don't think will help you tremendously. These are all great books.*

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