

# Get started

WITH LIFELONG LEARNING!



Evolve in a rapidly  
changing labour market

A guide to lifelong  
learning in practice

## **Authors**

**Johan Eriksson**, Head of Specialists, Google Sweden.  
Entrepreneur, author and lecturer on lifelong learning.

**Erik Sandström**, Chief Digital Officer, Arbetsförmedlingen.  
Lecturer and expert in digitalisation and future job matching.

## **Advisor**

**Cecilia Bjursell**, Associate Professor, Director at the National  
Centre for Lifelong Learning (Encell) at Jönköping University.

# Table of contents

- 1** Why lifelong learning?
- 2** What should I learn?
- 3** How do I learn?
- 4** When do I learn?
- 5** Create your own learning plan
- 6** Summary

# 1

## Why lifelong learning?

---

**We live in an exciting time with many opportunities. Digitalization and automation are changing all parts of our society at a rapid pace, in particular the labour market. This means that almost all professions, regardless of the industry, change at an equally rapid pace. Some jobs disappear completely, while other entirely new jobs see the light of day. A majority of today's schoolchildren will have professions that do not yet exist, and competence requirements are constantly shifting. At the same time we are getting older and are expected to work longer.**

**What does this mean for those currently on the job market?**

**In order to stay attractive and develop in a labour market where skill requirements are constantly changing, lifelong learning is important.**

This means to every week, every month, every year – yes, your whole life – actively learn new things. And it doesn't have to be a formal education – learning can happen in many different ways in your day to day life. If you choose to venture into that and also keep up with the digital development you will have an easier time getting and keeping a job.

We have developed this guide for people who are working. We are particularly addressing people who are in the midst of their working life – who have had time to gain experience and references, but who also have many years to go before retirement. The time we spend on skills development tends to decrease with age and therefore we want to inspire you to learn more, and to think about new learning. Here you will find concrete tips on how to get started with continuous learning in your day to day life, far beyond that annual full day conference or two day course that many of us have gotten used to.

The conditions for getting started are promising. Thanks to digital technology it is easier than ever to keep your learning going. And even if your employer and society can help, your own effort is just as important, if not more. So make change your friend and take command of your own development. Invest your time in lifelong learning and find your own way to do it. That will give you good conditions to evolve as quickly as the world around you.

**GOOD LUCK!**

# 2

## What should I learn?

---

**The exact skills you need depends, of course, on what is in demand in your particular industry. So try to keep up to date on how it evolves, and follow the reports on how the labour market is developing in general. But lose track of your passion, and in what direction you want to evolve. If you're interested in the subject your chances of learning it increase.**



## Start with something pleasurable

A tip to incorporate learning into day to day life is to start with an area that feels pleasurable. For example, if you are interested in gardening, you can

start by regularly learning new things about it. Then you can gradually create routines for learning for work related subjects as well.



## Invest in digital skills

Regardless of which industry you work in, or which path you choose to take in your professional life, it is a good investment to improve your digital skills. Digital technology will be an important part of almost all professions in the future. Investing in it will not only strengthen your career opportunities, but it will also help you in your continuous learning, because

a lot of learning today takes place via digital channels. The EU has defined eight key skills that are necessary in order for people to meet social and labour market developments, regardless of their professional field. One of these is the skill to learn how to learn, which this guide is about. Another is basic digital literacy, which includes several things:

- **Knowledge about finding information, communicating, interacting and producing digitally.**
- **Skills in using digital tools and services.**
- **Understanding of what digitalisation means for societal development.**
- **Motivation to participate in the development.**

Digital literacy is therefore about knowledge and skills combined with an open and curious attitude to digital development.



### TIPS!

**Improve your digital everyday life skills:**  
[www.digitalajag.se](http://www.digitalajag.se) – short and free courses online

**Sharpen your digital skills:**  
[www.digitalakademin.se](http://www.digitalakademin.se) – short and free courses online



## Develop skills that complement machines

So far, it is mainly occupations with repetitive work tasks that have been automated. First through machine automation, then as a result of computerisation and now through digitalisation. In the future however, professions with less repetitive tasks

will also be able to be carried out by computers and other machines. A tip is therefore to develop abilities that the machines have difficulty in replacing, because the need for these will increase over the next 15 years. Examples of abilities include:

- **Entrepreneurship and initiative**
- **Creativity**
- **Leadership**
- **Communicative ability and negotiating skills**
- **Relation-based abilities and empathy**



### TIPS!

## Explore programming

Did you know that programming can soon be as a skill that is as in demand and obvious as English is today? One tip is therefore to learn the basics of computer programming.

Not everyone needs to become a programmer, but with a better understanding of programming it is easier to keep up with the development and take on new digital work methods.

**Some examples of where you can learn programming without prior knowledge:**

[www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)

[www.codecademy.com](http://www.codecademy.com)

<http://eu.udacity.com>

# How digital are you?

---



Seven out of ten employees have felt the desire or need to improve their digital skills.



Roughly four out of ten workers have felt uncertain whether their digital skills are good enough for a new job with a new employer.



## FACTS

### **Automation and the labour market**

Almost half of all tasks performed in Sweden could be automated with the use of the technology already available today.

The technology replaces people in occupations with repetitive tasks (trade, administration, banking and insurance, etc.). At the same time, it complements people in occupations with more qualified tasks, so that these people can instead perform more creative tasks.

# INSPIRATION: What should I learn more about?



Step on the road to developing your lifelong learning is to decide what you want to learn more about. Here are some examples based on a number of common professional roles:

## **If you are an assistant nurse, you could learn more about:**

- **Motivational calls** – because the ability to build relationships will not be possible to replace with computers, but instead the demand for this will increase.
- **Process improvements** – as it is likely to always be in demand in healthcare. With more knowledge about process improvement, an assistant nurse with good insight into the area can play an important role in developing the business.
- **Digital tools for home care** – since more tools in healthcare are digitised via, for example, mobile phones. Exploring these tools is a great way to learn more about digital technology in the healthcare profession.



**If you are a primary school teacher, you could learn more about:**

- **How the brain works when we learn things** – because there is always new research on children’s learning.
- **Alternative cloud solutions for document sharing and homework management** – as there is a large international range of digital systems for schools and a great deal of expertise to benefit from.
- **Digital platforms for learning** – because there is a lot of useful content on the Internet that students can draw knowledge from.

**If you are a sales person you could learn more about:**

- **Psychology** – because a large part of sales work involves psychology, and it is harder to automate with technology.
- **Digital tools to find potential customers** – because there are many digital tools, forums and platforms used to process new customers.
- **AI-powered models for cost and time** – as there are AI-powered tools that have the potential to calculate time and project costs with significantly greater precision.

# 3

## How do I learn?

---

**Many of us are accustomed to acquiring an education at an early age and then making a living off it for the rest of our working lives, with the exception of some courses from time to time. This approach to learning is not adapted to a rapidly changing labour market.**

**An important key to lifelong learning is therefore to incorporate continuous learning in your day to day life and to learn in many different ways that can all be combined with work and family life. It is important that you yourself can control the pace for managing temporary peaks at work or caring for children.**

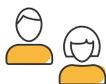
**Here are some examples of ways to learn:**



## Get a mentor

Having a mentor in the form of an expert in an area you want to learn more about is a free and effective way to learn new things. Start with a

lunch, and if it feels good you can see each other more regularly. Prepare three specific questions for each meeting with your mentor.



## Walk side by side with someone

To "shadow" an expert in the area you want to learn more about can be very instructive. It also provides you with an opportunity to ask specific questions

about different work phases. This often occurs as part of the introduction to a new job, but can be used successfully even at later times.



## Try another work place

If you for example work as a nurse in a hospital, it may be a learning experience for you to try to work in another hospital, or a department other than the one you belong to. You will then discover what others are

doing better, that you and your colleagues can learn from. Perhaps you will also discover what works at your own workplace. Talk to colleagues in other workplaces about the possibility of doing an exchange week.



## Learn through feedback

Professional athletes have coaches to help them reflect on their training. But how many nurses, carpenters or mid-managers have a personal coach? Probably not that many.

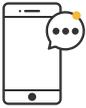
However, you do not need to have a personal coach to be able to reflect. Ask your colleagues or your manager for regular and honest feedback on your work.



## Take courses online with MOOC

MOOC stands for Massive Open Online courses and is an open, online course from universities, companies and other organizations. Unlike traditional courses, there is no limit in the number of participants. You also do not need to be enrolled as a student at the university to participate. Most courses are free of charge and those that cost money are usually much cheaper than traditional courses. All teaching, exercises and discussions are conducted via the

Internet. Some courses take place at a certain time, others you can take at your own pace, some are instructor-led and others are based on self-study. A typical MOOC is between one and ten weeks long and if you complete the whole course you can get a certificate as a diploma. There is often the possibility to give reviews, so when you are choosing a course you should keep an eye open for what other people have thought about it.



## Learn in other ways through the Internet

There are lots of ways to learn new things online, in addition to online courses. You can read blogs, reports and articles, listen to podcasts and watch videos. One example of learning online that has received a lot of attention is the Kenyan athlete Julius

Yego, also known as the "Youtube Man". He learned how javelin throw by watching YouTube clips instead of having a trainer, and became the world champion in javelin throw at the world championships in Beijing 2015.



### TIPS!

## Take an online course

Here are the three largest MOOC platforms that gather thousands of courses from hundreds of universities:

- edX - [www.edx.org](http://www.edx.org)
- Coursera - [www.coursera.org](http://www.coursera.org)
- FutureLearn - [www.futurelearn.com](http://www.futurelearn.com)



## FAKTA

### **Experience – far from everything**

It is easy to assume that people who have worked for ten years are automatically better at their jobs than those who worked for two years doing the same thing. But experiments have shown that doctors who have worked an average of two to three years can do an equally good and sometimes better job than doctors who have been working for 20–30 years. This is because the younger doctors have attended a more recent education, while older doctors have been under the impression that they have developed merely by working.

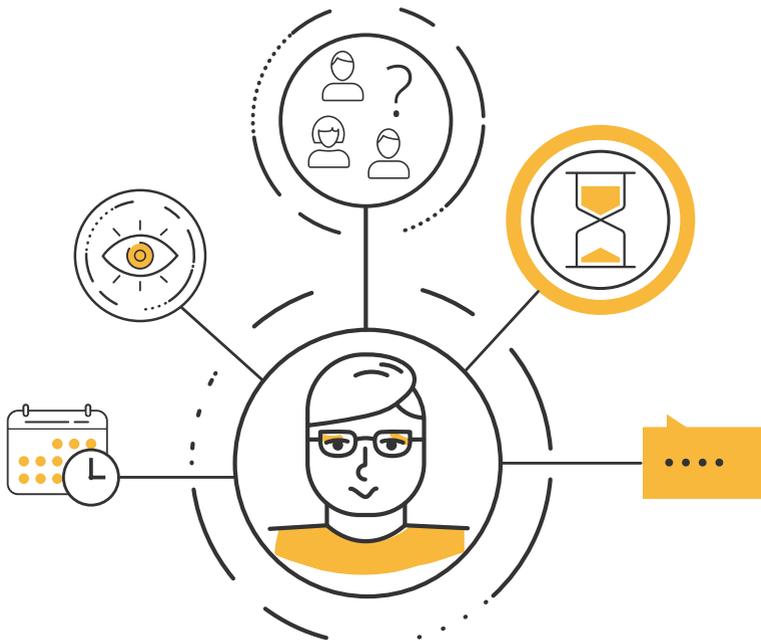
How good we become at our job depends on how consciously we set out to improve our skills. In other words, we need to actively learn new things in order to evolve. By setting clear goals, asking for recurring feedback from colleagues, taking part of “best practice” and regularly measuring the results of what we do, we can weave in active learning into our work. Our professional experience simply needs to be supplemented with new knowledge and constant feedback to make us better.



## TIPS!

### **It is more fun together!**

Taking an online course does not automatically mean that you have to take it on your own. If you find a friend to take the course with it can be more enjoyable. You can also help each other when hit a wall, and it will be easier to keep your promises to yourselves and to each other.



## Find your own way to learn

If it has been a long time since you went to school, you might associate learning with books and traditional classroom lessons. And your memories of school may not always be positive. But do not despair - today

there are ways to learn that suit everyone, whether you prefer to listen, watch or read.

Therefore you should think about what form you prefer to take in and process information.

### If you would rather learn through ...

... **watching:** Prioritize charts, flowcharts, shapes, and illustrations.

... **listening:** Prioritize lectures, podcasts and other situations where you use your hearing.

... **reading and writing:** Prioritize books, blogs, and other text sources. Summarize in writing what you learn.

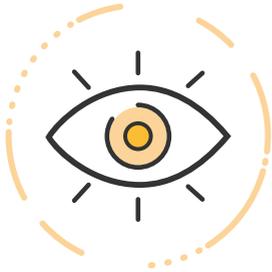
### TIPS!

## Find your learning style

Take this quiz to find out which learning style suits you best:

<http://vark-learn.com/home-swedish/>





## It is never too late ...

It was previously believed that the brain was static and lost brain cells and capacity with each passing year. But research has shown that the brain is malleable and that we acquire new brain cells even at old age. That's why it is never too late to

learn new things, even if you might feel a little out of practice. But to keep your brain in shape, you need to challenge and exercise the brain when it comes to thinking in new ways, something we tend to do less and less over the years.



## Exercise your brain

- **Break ingrained patterns and routines!**

The brain awakens and is stimulated when we break ingrained patterns. Try taking a new route to work, download a playlist of music from another culture, have lunch with a new colleague, read a book in a new genre, or follow news from another part of the world for a week.

- **Move your body!**

The brain is stimulated even when we move our bodies. In the short term, we become more creative and have better concentration, and in the long term regular exercise also has positive effects on memory.

# 4

## When do I learn?

---

**How much time do I need to spend on learning? And above all: when should learning take place, in an already filled calendar? These are questions that you and many others have certainly asked yourselves. Among workers in Sweden, the greatest obstacle to skills development is a lack of time.**

**The simple answer is that there are no shortcuts.**



## Start on a small scale

The average worker feels that 3-5 hours of professional development are needed per month. But to be able to evolve at the same pace as society is changing, rather than double, roughly ten hours per month is a good benchmark. If you work in a technology-intensive industry, there may be a need to add quadruple that figure, i.e. 20 hours per month. That may sound like a lot. But you should view it as a

goal, and start by creating a routine for something that is realistic for you to achieve, week after week. Once you have gotten the routine down, you can slowly increase the number of hours and sessions that you devote to learning. If you have set aside one hour per week for learning, you can benefit from dividing the hour into four 15-minute sessions. This will help you to establish the new habit.



## Schedule your learning

Just like physical training, learning needs to be prioritized and planned in order for it to become a reality and a part of your everyday life. Of course, your calendar needs to be the controlling factor, but think about when

your conditions to learn new things are the best. Are you more focused in the morning or in the evening? Think about what suits you best and make sure to take advantage of it in your learning.

# How much time do you spend on skills development?



**Four out of ten employees have not spent any time at all on skills development in the last month.**



**An average worker has spent one to two hours on skills development in the last month.**

# 5

# Create your own learning plan



## 1. Choose the subject

Write down a subject related to your job that you want to learn more about. Also write down a subject linked to digital technology, since that is relevant for everyone to learn more about.

## 2. Set clear goals

Set specific and measurable goals for what you want to learn. This will make it easier to determine whether learning makes a difference. Make your goal small enough for you not to fail. One common reason for why we fail to incorporate a new habit is that we set unrealistic goals.

## 3. Decide how to learn

Decide how to learn (read more in the "How Should I learn?" section), and feel free to combine different ways of learning. Make sure you learn from someone who is better than you are at something or from proven knowledge you do not yet have.

## 4. Decide how much to learn

Be clear when you set aside time each week for your learning. Do not be too ambitious at first, but instead increase the time you spend on learning gradually as you get more accustomed to it.

## 5. Turn off and focus

When you commit to learning something you need to be completely focused and not be on autopilot. If you don't feel fully focused it's better to postpone the learning.



## **6. It is better to do something than nothing at all**

We all fail sometimes when we try to start new habits, and there will probably be a week when you simply do not have time to spend on your learning. But try to stick to the principle of never missing two sessions in a row.

## **7. Reflect**

Also, decide on a time each week when you reflect on your learning for five minutes: What has worked well? What has not worked so well? Have I tried something new and how did it go?

## **8. Learn together with others**

A good way to keep motivation up is to learn new things together with others. Find colleagues or friends who want to learn the same things as you and make a common plan for your learning. Also, think about who or what people at your workplace that you can more from.

## **9. Be patient**

The most important thing about working in a new habit is not to succeed from the very first moment, but to never to give up. Keep on working on your learning week after week. Sooner or later you will find a set-up and a pace that suits you.

## **10. Share your learning plan with others**

A learning plan in writing, which does not only exist in your mind, will be easier to stick to. So be sure to write it down and feel free to share it with your manager and discuss what conditions you need.

# 6

## SUMMARY

# Get started on your lifelong learning!

---

### **1. Start with something pleasurable**

If you choose a subject that you are particularly interested in it will be easier to create a learning routine. After that you can gradually add other subjects.

### **2. Schedule your learning**

Just like physical training, learning needs to be prioritized and planned in order for it to become a reality and a part of your everyday life. Therefore, set time aside in your calendar.

### **3. Regardless of the industry – invest in digital skills.**

Regardless of which industry you work in, or which path you choose to take in your professional life, it is a good investment to improve your digital skills. Digital technology will be an important part of almost all professions in the future.

### **4. Explore online courses**

There is a wide range of open courses on the Internet in a variety of areas.

Some take place at a certain time, others you can take at your own pace. Some are instructor-led and others are based on self-study.

### **5. Find your learning style**

Do you prefer to take in information by listening, watching or reading? Explore which form suits you best, and prioritize it in your learning.

### **6. Establish a learning plan**

Write down what you want to learn, how you want to learn it, and what goals you have with your learning.

### **7. Start in a small scale – gradually increase**

If you have set aside one hour per week for learning, you can benefit from dividing the hour up into four 15-minute sessions in the beginning. This will help you to establish the new habit.

## Learning plan - a simple template

I will learn more about: .....

I will use the following sources: .....

.....

I have as my goal to: .....

I will measure my progress by: .....

.....

.....

## Sources

Swedish Public Employment Service 2018. Automation, polarisation and mass-unemployment – what does research say?

Swedish Public Employment Service/KantarSifo. February 2019. Survey among 3,019 workers in Sweden.

Ericsson, Anders and Pool, Robert. 2017 Peak.

Hansen, Anders. 2016 Brain-Strong.

Mckinsey. 2017 Digitally-enabled automation and artificial intelligence: Shaping the future of work in Europe's digital front-runners.

McKinsey Global Institute. 2018. Skill shift: Automation and the future of the workforce.

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius\\_Yego](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius_Yego)

Eriksson PS, Perfilieva E, Björk-Eriksson T, Alborn AM, Nordborg C, Peterson DA, Gage FH. 1998 Neurogenesis in the adult human hippocampus.

Official Journal of the European Union. 2018. Council recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning.

**Get ready for the future – whatever it looks like!**

<http://arbetsformedlingen.se/livslangtlarande>

