

Jetting Off To The Right Start – Top Ten Tips for Settling In

By Kimberley Millhouse, Senior Move Manager, Crown Relocations

Relocating overseas is an exciting experience, yet the flurry of preparation beforehand can overshadow one crucial consideration – how to give your relocation the best chance of succeeding. Although there is no way of guaranteeing its success, there are steps you can take to give yourself the best possible start. Kimberley Millhouse, Senior Move Manager at Crown Relocations, has put together some practical tips to help you along your way.

Before you go...

Research

Time is a luxury that many people don't have in abundance when it comes to relocating, but the more time you can put aside to do some research, the better. Whilst the thought might be off-putting, it will pay dividends later on and help you to avoid mistakes.

Consider what you would set-up if you moved house in the UK, such as a phone line, utilities and council tax, and find out what information you will be required to provide in order to do this in your new location.

If you are using relocation specialists, your representative will be able to advise you accordingly and direct you to informative websites; otherwise you should be able to find out more details and legal requirements from government and service provider websites.

Finding local places of interest

Locating places in advance that you will need to visit once you have arrived, such as a supermarket, can be a great time and stress saver. It would be worthwhile marking them on a map so that you can find your way around when you're out and about. Crucially, it also means you won't need to rely on the internet when you arrive. After all, it could take some time to organise phone lines and internet access for your new home.

This is also a useful way to help you establish elements of your current lifestyle that you wish to continue, such as going to a gym, cinema or restaurants. Doing the activities that you are used to will help you to avoid feeling homesick. If you do find yourself feeling down or disappointed about the relocation, try to be realistic about the issues you are facing and don't stay at home. Find places you enjoy and establish routines that will work for you.

Learn about your new country

It is perfectly natural to experience culture shock when you arrive so it can be very beneficial to prepare yourself for those differences. You may think that some countries have similar cultures to the UK, but that doesn't mean you

won't feel the effects of culture shock. No matter how alike the countries are, it can often help to take part in an intercultural training course to get a true understanding of the new culture.

The more you know about your new surroundings the better placed you will be to connect with the locals and understand the way the country is governed. If you can, visiting your new location before you move will also help you to know what to expect.

Explore every opportunity for employment

Whether you're relocating on your own or with your family, arranging a job from afar can be tricky, but don't give up hope.

The benefits of a stable job are clear. If you are employed in your new location, you will become accustomed to the local area much more quickly. Working will help you to establish a degree of routine and will build upon your personal contacts. Try to keep focused on what you would like to do and get in touch with as many companies as possible so that you have something lined up for when you arrive.

Finding the perfect pad

You will feel more settled if you have somewhere to call your own, but that doesn't mean you need to buy a house! Simply find somewhere that you can use as a permanent base rather than relying on a hotel. If you're relocating on your own and don't like the thought of renting a property by yourself, look on websites for potential house shares.

Remember to take into account the local area when choosing your new home. Making sure you pick somewhere that has easy access to your job, suitable schools and the local amenities will allow you to familiarise yourself with the area more quickly and get used to your surroundings.

Secure school places

Routines can be very important for children so attending school shortly after you arrive can help both you and your children to establish a routine and settle in. By arranging a school for your child before the relocation, you will avoid a last minute panic to find somewhere suitable when you arrive.

If you have time to visit schools in the area, you will have chance to explore the facilities, meet the teachers and get a feel for what kind of school you want your child to attend.

Once you have arrived...

Explore

Once you are over the jet lag, you will undoubtedly be excited and full of enthusiasm about your new destination. You really should harness this energy as much as possible - now is the time to get your map out and explore the local area. This will immediately give you a sense of where you are, which will help to build your feelings of comfort and familiarity.

Don't let distance keep you apart

Keeping in touch with loved ones can help to reduce the feeling of homesickness which is crucial when you first relocate. Nowadays, there is a wide variety of low cost, quick and user-friendly ways to maintain contact.

The internet is a great way of keeping the cost of staying in touch down. Software such as Skype, allows you to phone people through the internet so you can make free calls for as long as you like and, if they have a webcam, you will be able to see whoever you're talking to.

Social networking websites such as Facebook allow you to share photos, have live chats and catch up on what is happening back home. Make sure you keep your profile up-to-date so your loved ones back home can see what you are up to and in turn, keep you posted on the latest from them.

Join expat groups

Investigate local expat groups and, when you arrive, make an effort to join as many as possible. The members of these groups can be a vital source of encouragement, practical assistance and information to help you settle in.

Expat groups can also be a great way to build your support network and make friends, which can be particularly important if you are in a country with a different first language to your own. Expats will be able to help you practice the language, as well as learn the local culture. What's more, you can use their experiences of local services, from dentists to tap classes, to find out the best places to use.

Remember - they have been through the same process as you and will therefore know and understand what you are going through, as well as the needs you might have. Don't be shy about asking for help.

Make it work for you

Simply put, there is nothing quite like research to set your relocation in the right direction; seek as much assistance as you can to help to ease the burden and get your friends and family involved in the process – they will be more than happy to help you get the best start you can.