To Upskill or Not to Upskill: The When, Why, and How

Upskilling is a targeted way to bolster your competitiveness in your current role or career path. Whether aiming for a better position, switching industries, or earning a higher salary, it gives you the advantage employers seek today. This handout will outline when, why, and how to upskill.

When should I upskill?

> **When skills become outdated:**
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> Industries evolve, and new technologies and standards emerge. Upskilling keeps you relevant.

> **When seeking job security or flexibility:**
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> Employers value adaptable talent; a broader skill set enhances both stability and mobility.

> **When applying for a promotion within your career field:**
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> Read job postings to identify required gaps and proactively bridge them.

> **During career breaks or layoffs:**
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> A structured upskilling plan can transform employment gaps into valuable and intentional opportunities.

> **After feedback or performance reviews:**
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> Use constructive criticism to pinpoint areas for improvement and growth.

Why should I upskill?

> **To remain employable:**
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> Staying ahead of industry trends ensures you're always a strong candidate.

> **To command higher pay:**
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> In-demand skills often come with a salary premium.

> **To unlock new industries:**
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> Skills in analytics, programming, leadership, or digital tech expand your career possibilities.

> **To future-proof your career:**
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> As AI and automation continue to evolve, skill-based hiring becomes the primary focus.

> **To enhance confidence and satisfaction:**
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> Achieving mastery boosts morale and motivation.

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How Should I Upskill?

1 **Set clear goals**

Define your purpose (promotion? pivot? security?).

2 **Do a skills gap audit**

Compare your current skills vs. job requirements or trends.

3 **Research and prioritize**

Focus on high-value technical (data, AI, digital tools) and soft skills (collaboration, leadership).

4 **Choose your learning method**

Consider online classes, micro-credentials, workshops, hands-on projects, and mentoring.

5 **Create a schedule and milestones**

Build a realistic timeline and track progress.

6 **Apply and showcase new skills**

Use skills in real projects, update your resume and LinkedIn.

7 **Seek feedback and pivot**

Ask mentors or peers, and adjust the plan as needed.

Tips for Staying on Track

> **Dedicate consistent time:**
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> Even 30 minutes, whether on weekdays or weekends, can yield significant progress without burnout.

> **Balance hard and soft skills:**
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> Technical ability is vital, but communication, adaptability, and leadership differentiate you.

> **Use cost-effective training options:**
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> Leverage Coursera, LinkedIn Learning, local higher education institutions, and financial aid if eligible.

> **Build a portfolio:**
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> Showcase projects or certifications to validate your learning (e.g., on LinkedIn or professional websites).

> **Keep networking:**
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> Events, mentors, and online communities offer both insight and accountability.

Remember

Review the "Post-Graduate Certificates, Diplomas, and Micro-Credentials" section on the Career Services [Further Education Resources](#) webpage for further upskilling ideas.