

**PIXEL
CATCHER**



**FREELANCING:
MAKING THE
LEAP**

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

So you're thinking of going freelance?

Before we get into this, here's a little about myself:

At the time of writing, I'm a couple of months ahead of where you are now, I went freelance at the end of February 2020. So don't look to me as an expert by any means. Think of me as more of a friendly guiding hand, and a sign that if you do make the leap, **you won't die.**

Going freelance was the biggest and scariest decision I'd made since I left home for university, back in 2013. It also turned out to be remarkably poor timing, because a few short weeks later, s**t hit the fan and the country went into lockdown. Oops!

But don't worry, I'm okay for now, thanks to a few tips I'm about to share with you...

SAFETY FIRST

I can't stress this enough. For the love of all that's holy, don't leap without a safety net!

Most of the advice you'll see says make sure you have 3 months worth of rent and bills etc saved up in your piggy bank as a financial buffer, in case things are slow-going for a while. I say that's too low! Store up a minimum of 5 months worth, because you never know when a global pandemic might come along to rain on your financial parade. I'm thanking my lucky stars I did that, because now I have the peace of mind of knowing I can outlast this unexpected downturn if I'm really struggling for work.

So save those pennies!

If you haven't got it already, [Monzo](https://monzo.com) is a great way of managing your personal finances and saving money. I particularly love their round-up pots. And it's free! Check it out at monzo.com (I'm not on commission!)

YOUR SHOP WINDOW

Whatever your freelance business is, you'll probably need a website.

Luckily this is super easy to set up now thanks to services like **Wix**, **Squarespace**, or my personal site of choice, **Wordpress**. Do yourself the favour of buying a custom domain name and email address too, it makes you look far more professional and, after all, if you don't value yourself enough to invest in you, why should anyone else?

I set up mine for as little as £114.54, using **Bluehost**, **Wordpress** and **Office 365**. My web developer friend did scoff at my use of Bluehost though... Brian, I'm sincerely sorry for hurting your soul. Please forgive me.

I'm still learning the ins and outs of what makes a good website, it's come a long way since the first iteration, but if you happen to be a pro at this already, I'd love to hear from you!

YOUR FIRST GIGS

Maybe this is obvious to you, but just in case - your first paid jobs as a freelancer will be from people you already know.

It makes total sense when you think about it, you already have a relationship with those people, they trust you, and so are more likely to give you money for your expertise when you're just starting out. I'm very grateful to my friends and ex-colleagues who've supported me on the freelance journey so far. You know who you are. So, see what opportunities could lie with who you already know, you don't know what connections they may have.

Luckily everyone I've worked with so far have been model clients, paid on time etc etc - but a word to the wise, always do your due diligence with paperwork once money is involved. It could save you a lot of headaches and upset down the line if things don't go quite as smoothly.

GROW WHO YOU KNOW!

Love it or hate it, the next tip is... networking!

If you just threw up in your mouth at the thought of talking to other people, don't worry, I'm an introvert too. But I'm here to tell you, it's not as bad as you think. In fact, I met some wonderful like-minded creatives in my first few weeks of freelance life (remember when we used to be allowed to meet people face to face? Wow, what a throwback!). Use all that free time you've got to meet new people, expand your horizons, you never know where a door might open for you. Meet for a coffee when it's no longer a crime.

But don't go in there with the hard sell, get to know them, help them out if you can. One day they might just become one of those people you know, who trust you enough to hire you.

WHO'S THE BOSS?

You are!

I actually liked my old boss a lot, but I like my new one even more! (well, most of the time...)

Being your own boss is a breath of fresh air, you can work when you want, where you want and how you want! But don't be mistaken, it's a double-edged sword. As your own boss, you are solely responsible for your success. If you screw up, that's on you, there's no manager to hide behind.

Be strict with yourself and your time, hit your deadlines, be nice to your clients.

HELLO YOU!

Time to discover those new interests!

With all the extra time you'll find yourself with when you go freelance, and the ability to choose the projects you take on and the work you get paid for, you'll soon start discovering the areas that actually interest you!

Take time to delve into new hobbies, expand your skillset. There'll be times when you feel like you should be chasing work, but sometimes that can be fruitless. So if you're angling for something to do, teach yourself something new instead.

Having the time to explore new things helps me a lot, I have the attention span of a teaspoon so new challenges keep me focused. Hence why I'm not just a 3D artist, logo designer or photographer - specialising like that would drive me insane. But get good at these things first, learn, and keep learning.

THAT'S ALL FOLKS!

That's all from me for now. Obviously this is far from a comprehensive guide to freelancing, but I hope you've got something useful in these few tips from my experience so far.

If you're keen to find out more about freelancing, or finding a direction, I would highly recommend reading Marianne Cantwell's straight-talking and inspirational '[Be A Free Range Human](#)'. It's easily worth more than the fiver it's selling for on Amazon right now.

You can find me on Instagram [@pixel.catcher](#), or you can email andy@pixelcatcher.co.uk.

I'd love to hear from you if you've got your own stories of freelancing, or if you've got any other questions not covered here.