



Checklist for transitioning from separation to independence

While the [national divorce rate has been trending downwards](#) for several years now, separation and divorce still occurs, and can be an emotionally draining time for many Australians around the country. The effects of separating from your partner may spill into other parts of your life – and if you're not prepared, it can seem overwhelming.

It's important to recognise what may be happening and put steps in place to support becoming more independent. One way to take back control of your future is to put together a checklist of the most important 'to dos' in your life right now. Here's how you can help get the ball rolling with the transition from separation to independence.



STEP #1: SEEK OUT EXTERNAL SUPPORT

You don't have to go through one of life's biggest struggles alone. Even if the breakup is amicable and you're still on good terms with your former partner, the emotional anxiety can manifest itself in other parts of your life, such as losing sleep or not performing your best at work.

Maintaining your mental wellbeing after a separation is key, so consider whether counselling or therapy might help you navigate returning to single life. If you're not keen on diving straight into therapy, have a chat with your GP or local doctor and see if they recommend it as an option to support improving your mental health.

STEP #2: ORGANISE YOUR PAPERWORK

When the dust has settled, you'll begin to realise that there's more to separating than just cutting emotional ties.

Don't delay in organising your paperwork, as this can lead to financial problems in the short and long term.

[MoneySmart recommends](#) gathering the important documents you'll need to separate your finances, which might include the marriage certificate, bank and super statements, joint policies such as [life insurance](#), car registration, bank account details and credit card information.

The Australian Government's [MoneySmart website](#) also recommends that you keep a record of the date you separated, and set up a secure location to receive all future correspondence – whether that's via a personal email or your own PO Box.



STEP #3: UPDATE YOUR WILL, BANK ACCOUNTS AND INSURANCE POLICIES

Now it's time to forge your own financial future by updating critical documents. If you and your former partner created a will together, you'll need to get a new one drawn up.

Likewise, it's important to get your own bank account set up and finalise the closure of any joint accounts you may have had. The same applies for insurance policies – so speak to your provider to find out how you can end any joint policies and move to an individual policy such as for example, [life insurance cover](#).

STEP #4: CREATE A BUDGET FOR YOURSELF

When you're in a relationship, it can be easy to fall into habits and no longer worry about budgeting. After separating you should ensure you are financially prepared for the future.

[Creating – and sticking to – a budget](#) is a great way to start your independence. If you're not sure where to begin, there are plenty of [free budget planners online](#) as well as a variety of handy budgeting apps that can live in your home and help you manage your day-to-day expenses and savings.



STEP #5: ELIMINATE JOINT DEBT

Even in the best break-up situations, you don't want to be reliant on your former partner for financial support. Independence starts with breaking those financial ties, so you may need to get to work on eliminating joint debt such as personal loans or credit cards that you may have together. You may also need to speak to your financial provider to let them know about the changes to your personal situation.



STEP #6: REASSESS YOUR GOALS

Now that you've taken care of the shared bank accounts, contacted your financial provider about your change in circumstances and created your own individual insurance policies - take time to focus on your future.

Despite some people finding that separation, while emotionally exhausting, can result in a more positive outlook on their future, this isn't always the case. Separation may be out of one partner's hands entirely, and this can be confronting to manage alone. Make sure you reach out to your support network and take your time getting back on top of things.

Once you're ready, the transition to independence could start by evaluating what you want for your future. It could be an opportunity to upskill yourself or try out a different career, or perhaps it simply means you'll be able to spend more time with those you love most.

CONCLUSION

Separating from a partner can be a time-consuming, draining and mentally challenging period. However, by taking the time to tackle these steps, you'll be in a better position to help manage the transition to independence.

If you need to change a joint insurance policy and start your own individual life insurance cover, consider contacting Real Insurance today on 1300 377 325.