

# Getting Started with Usability Testing

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The best way to get started in usability is getting your hands dirty. Yes, people, that means testing.

Now, many web designers have never actually seen any users using their sites. If you're one of them, prepare for a bit of a shock. You'll probably find people can't use them, especially if there's functionality involved (forms, etc.). So go ahead, do some testing.

## How to do user testing:

There are a few important rules and steps to follow when doing user testing:

1. Get a person who fits the user profile for the site. Don't get someone who has worked on it, don't get a geek. Get a real person (off the streets if you have to). Try to get someone that's as close as possible to the intended users of the site.
2. Sit them down in front of a computer, give them the URL, and tell them a small scenario, like: "I'm testing my CV site, imagine you're an employer looking to see if my skills match the ones you are looking for to fill a job position." Also tell them to think aloud, especially when they're wondering about something.
3. Then: shut up. Don't speak. Do not utter a word!
4. Sounds easy, but see if you actually *can* shut up.
5. Watch them use the site. If they ask you something, tell them you're not there. Then shut up again.
6. Start noting all the things you're gonna have to change.
7. Afterwards ask them what they thought.

Easy, isn't it? You'll be surprised at the results, and what's even cooler, you can now put "usability testing" on your CV site.

Finally, here are some links. I'm not giving all of them, just the top sites you just **must** visit, if you haven't already.

## Sample Usability Questions

Screen shown	Specific area or Navigation	Questions/Discussion
Homepage	Entire page, general	Where would you find a copy of my resume or CV?
Homepage	Entire page, general	How would you go about contacting me? What are the contact options?
Resume	Education	What is the postgraduate program I am enrolled in? What is my previous educational experience?
Resume	Skills or Accomplishments	What would you click to get a list of my skills? Does the path to the skills make navigational sense?
Portfolio	Portfolio of photography or screen shots of previous work	How to you go from one screen shot to the other? How do you get a large version of the thumbnail? How do you close the larger version?
		<b>Task Complete</b>