



Five ways to get a pay rise

Its official - rich people live longer and healthier lives. So isn't it about time you got that long-deserved pay rise?

So, the more money you have the greater your chances of living a long and healthy life. Now there's a surprise.

And in that case Nicole Kidman can sit back safe in the knowledge that she's got many more years ahead of her to enjoy the latest \$15 million she bagged for her new movie Stepford Wives.

It'll also be good news for the definitely blonde but anything but dumb Reese Witherspoon who also picked up the same amount for Legally Blonde II. And, of course, Julia Roberts who got a cool \$25 million for her latest movie, Mona Lisa Smile. (Well, I suppose with twins on the way she's going to need the cash...)

Sickening hey? But if your salary doesn't quite rank alongside the movie star status of Julia, Reese, Nicole and co. don't worry. According to a new book out by Sir Michael Marmot, professor of epidemiology and public health at University College London, apparently even a small promotion at work – and the increase in salary that goes with it - may help you live longer.

So here are five tips on how to snare that life-enhancing (not to mention purse-enhancing) pay rise.

1. Just ask for it

Simple but effective. If you want something you have to ask for it and when it comes to money, especially where bosses are concerned, it's no different. Go get what you deserve. Think it's too cheeky? You can bet your colleagues have all had the guts it takes to ask for some more money. Remember: if you don't ask, you don't get.

But there are some basics to get right to make the task all the more likely to succeed.

Pick your moment

It's no good trying to grab your boss while they're flying out the door to some urgent meeting. Nor is it a good idea to broach the topic if they and/or you are up against a tight deadline. And asking for more money when they've just laid off half the team or announced a pay-rise freeze, is just plain daft.

The optimum time is just as you complete a project successfully or if (and I know this is a big if) your boss actually praises you for a job well done.

Sell yourself

When you do decide the time is right, the way you handle the whole pay rise issue is also vital. You have to approach this as though you were promoting a new product or a new idea i.e. you've got to make a pitch. Tell your boss why you deserve a pay rise, highlighting your strengths. Don't be afraid to tell them why you're great. In fact, if you're going to have half a chance of success you're going to have to.

Men are better at this than women, apparently. While your average Joe Bloggs will more than happily wax lyrical about his achievements, Joanna Bloggs is far more likely to steer clear of 'boastful' talk, hoping her boss will appreciate all her hard work. Sometimes you just have to gently remind them to appreciate you.

In a similar vein, ask for more than you expect. Not way over the top, but enough to give your boss room to manoeuvre. That way you'll both be happy.

Be prepared to negotiate

If things don't appear to be going your way resist any urge to start getting snippy. The last thing you want to do is leave this meeting with your boss thinking you've got a bad attitude.

You can't demand a pay rise, but if all else fails, don't be shy to ask about benefits such as pensions or a company car as part of your negotiations.

Dress to impress

They always say that women who wear make-up to work climb the corporate ladder more quickly. Whether that's 100% true, it won't do your cause any harm if you go to the meeting looking business-like and professional.

First impressions do count and if your boss is discussing money they'll prefer to do so with someone who looks as much the business as they sound it. Plus you'll feel a whole lot more confident if you know you look good too.

And lastly, don't expect to walk away with the pay rise in the bag. Don't feel disappointed if the boss says they'll get back to you. More likely than not they need time to go through the figures and see what they can afford to pay you. See it as a positive response. After all, they haven't said no, outright, have they?

2. Threaten to resign

This is a high risk strategy but one that can be highly lucrative. The downside of course is that you could end up with a huge pay cut (i.e. no salary at all because you've had to resign) if it all goes wrong.

The best time to play this card is when you actually do have another job offer (then at least you have a fall-back plan). You see, most employers prefer to keep their staff rather than have the hassle of hiring and training someone new. So when you tell them you've been offered another job there's a good chance they'll try to convince you to stay – and use a pay rise as an incentive.

Using this strategy is often successful in lucrative jobs such as investment banking where macho-style office politics is often the norm. You might want to consider carefully whether it's appropriate in other work environments; after all you are effectively holding a gun to your boss' head. Even if they give in to you now they may resent your action in the longer term.

3. Get a new job

If you think you deserve more, sometimes the only way to move on up in the salary stakes is to find an employer who agrees with you.

Just remember though that a few extra pounds in your pay cheque every month aren't necessarily the only consideration. If your present employer offers you a range of benefits bear those in mind when you consider the new offer. You should also take a step back and make sure you can handle the uncertainty if your new role isn't as secure or doesn't have the same prospects as your current job.

4. Learn a new skill or boost your qualifications

The idea behind this is that better-qualified employees are a greater asset. What you are effectively doing is building your role and making yourself a more vital part of the team. Offer to take on new responsibilities or implement new strategies.

Once your boss sees how much you've contributed they should realise that you're a more valuable member of staff. If not, gently remind them.

5. Get creative and find yourself that little bit extra

There are a million and one ways to boost your income. There's everything from taking on a second job to writing a novel, or going busking in your spare time, to selling a family heirloom, investing in property or simply finding a few ways to claw back some money from the tax man.

Hell, even something as simple as sorting out your finances will probably give you a little extra. Think laterally and you'll find there are lots of money-making ideas. After all working nine to five is not the only way to earn a living.

Just ask Dolly Parton.

Now she's not short of a few bob either.