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House-sit and see the world for free

The Guardian

By [Will Coldwell](#)

Tuesday 10 December 2013

5 <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2013/dec/10/house-sitting-see-the-world-for-free>

Is there such a thing as a free holiday? House-sitting comes pretty close. Here's our guide on how to do it

How does it work?

10 In exchange for free accommodation, homeowners hand over their keys to people willing to take care of their house while they're away. It's a great way to have a cheap holiday, or to try living somewhere different, and can be a chance to stay in some wonderful residential properties you'd never normally be able to afford.

Who can do it?

15 Anyone. It can work particularly well for families looking for a large house to stay in while on holiday, but also suits independent travellers who are easy going about the exact location of their accommodation. The homeowner will usually have a preference and it will also depend on the size of the property.

What will I need to do?

20 You will be expected to keep the house safe, tidy and in a good condition until the owner returns. It is quite common for house-sitters to have to look after pets too, so be prepared to find yourself in the company of a variety of animals. Some homeowners will request specific tasks for you to do, such as taking care of the garden, but this should all be discussed and agreed on in advance.

Will I get paid?

25 In most cases house-sitting is a straight swap, with no money changing hands. However, sometimes the sitter will get a small fee, particularly if they have a large number of chores to take care of or are looking after a property in an isolated location. Likewise, if a house-sitter is staying in a property for a very long time, they may be asked to contribute some rent.

Advice from experienced house-sitters.

30 "I would recommend asking exactly what you need to do," says Rachael. "And things like if there are any rooms they'd prefer you didn't go into, how the washing machine works, where the keys are to be left when you leave and whether they have references from anyone else who has house-sat for them before. And always get a mobile number and/or email address for them in case anything goes wrong or you need their advice about something". [Nine](#), a writer
35 currently living in Kuala Lumpur, also recommends having a fair amount of communication with the owner beforehand. "It's just good to either know the homeowner first, get a good sense of them from their online profile, or talk to them on Skype," she says. "Get a feel for their standards, and also put their mind at ease if they're new to having a house-sitter. It's also good to ask about practicalities like how far the place is from the nearest shops. Sometimes
40 homeowners lend me their car. I feel pretty happy to adapt to whatever situation, so my only two questions are whether there's internet and whether I can have friends come to stay."

Proven Tips To Get Your First House Sitting Job

Great Big Globe

45 By Alana

<http://www.greatbiglobe.com/first-house-sitting-job/>

Landing your first house sitting job is difficult and can sometimes take months. However, after completing five house sits (in Asia, Europe, and North America), we are confident in passing along our proven tips to get your first house sitting job!

50 **Pick a House Sitting Website**

Your first step should be choosing a house sitting website that fits your needs and preferences. Are you looking to house sit in Europe? In the U.S.? All over the world? There are lots of sites that specialize in specific locations, so make sure you find the one that works for you. Our preferred site is TrustedHouseSitters.com.

55 TrustedHousesitters has listings from all over the world, which is exactly what we were looking for during our global travels. Like most sites, you have to pay to be listed as a house sitter, but don't let the fee stop you from signing up. House sitting pays for itself after your first sit!

60 We prefer TrustedHousesitters because of its solid reputation in the industry, and how it interacts with its customers (both homeowners and sitters). While it tends to have a lot of United Kingdom, Australian, Canadian and U.S. sits, we've started seeing more and more listings for Asia and Africa. You'll even find some listings in the really sought-after Caribbean region.

65 A huge plus for becoming a registered member of TrustedHousesitters, is that you can view listings 24 hours before unregistered members. More on why that is important to follow.

Create a Killer House Sitter Profile

So, you now have your preferred website picked out. The next and most important step to get your first house sitting job – create your house sitter profile.

70 This may seem obvious, but be sure to fill out your house sitter profile completely. Don't leave any part blank. Other than your application message, this is all the homeowner knows about you. If you can't be bothered to fill out a profile, you probably can't be bothered to take good care of a their house and pets.

75 This is your opportunity to show off who you are and why you are the perfect choice for watching their home and pets. Be unique and stand out, in a positive way. Let your personality shine! Don't just list your qualifications, but share your interests and dreams. Write about your story and why you would make a great candidate for house and pet sitting.

Showing yourself honestly and in a memorable way will help a homeowner remember you. Don't be cocky and don't lie, open up your heart and let them know how awesome you are. Homeowners often receive 50+ applications, so find your own way to stand out!

80 Ask for Recommendations

Never house sit before? Don't worry, neither had we. However, finding solid recommendations to prove all those great things you said in your profile is important.

85 While we hadn't house sat, we have rented apartments and stayed in plenty of vacation rentals in the past. So, contact previous landlords or homeowners who have personally had you stay in their buildings and ask for a reference (this is called a Landlord Sitting Reference on TrustedHousesitters). You can request an email link to be sent directly to an 'External Reference' via the TrustedHousesitters dashboard.

90 If you've used Airbnb, HomeAway, or VRBO you probably have reviews from property owners. Another way to allow homeowners to hear from others about you is to direct them to your reviews on these other websites.

One last option to get solid recommendations on your profile is to house or pet sit in your local area and request a review of your services. Get the word out by posting on Facebook or let your friends and family know you are available and interested in sitting. Chances are high that someone would be happy to take you up on a long weekend of house and pet sitting.

95 After you do a fantastic job (obviously, right?) sitting, this person can now be your first house/pet sitting reference on your profile! This is done similarly to the Landlord Sitting Reference noted above, using a direct link sent to them with the 'External Reference' request via the dashboard. In this instance, you simply tab it as a House/Pet Sitting Reference and not a Landlord Sitting Reference.

100 Check For New Listings Regularly

New house sits come out daily. So, if you are serious about wanting your first house sit you need to be checking the listings frequently.

105 Remember when I mentioned that registered TrustedHousesitters members get to view listings 24 hours before non-members? Here is why that is important. When a listing goes up, homeowners will often receive dozens of applications within the first 24 hours. As a homeowner that can be very overwhelming, so they will simply pause or stop accepting applications. At that point, all those unregistered members are out of luck.

110 Most house sitting websites send out daily emails with new listings, which we used to wait for as non-members. However, we kept finding ourselves interested and clicking over to apply and finding the sit already filled. Turned out the members and the 24-hour advanced window had the jump on us.

Make Your Application Personal

115 You're signed up, have an awesome profile, and found the perfect house sitting opportunity. What's next? Time to wow the homeowners with a meaningful and personal application message.

When writing your introductory message that is sent over with your profile, be sure to read and re-read the homeowners listing and address all the points the homeowner makes. Do they prefer someone handy around the house? Tell them about your skills. Do you have personal experience with the breed of dog they have? Be sure to note that of course.

120 If they use their pets names in the listing, be sure to use the names in your message. And if you've visited their city before, let them know you are familiar with the area.

Lastly, let them know you've looked into transportation options and would not have any issues being available for the dates specified in the listing. Do everything you can to make the homeowner truly understand how interested and qualified you are for the sit.

125 **Make Yourself Available For Skype Interviews**

Many homeowners will narrow down the pool of applicants and want to conduct a Skype interview to get a better feel. So, make sure you have a Skype account (it's free if you don't have one, so no worries).

130 Always make yourself available at the homeowners convenience and treat it like a regular job interview. Don't look like a slob, but you also don't need to be wearing a suit. Be prepared and research the area and necessary flight information, and be sure to have questions for the homeowner. This shouldn't be an issue as listings can be brief, just make sure you are comfortable and get everything answered that might be in question on your end. And finally, BE YOURSELF and let them see the real you.

135 **Own private resort - Tropical Gardens with Pool**

<https://www.trustedhousesitters.com/house-and-pet-sitting-assignments/australia/queensland/brisbane/1/116279/>

Sonja, home and pet owner
Brisbane, QLD, Australia

140 **Sitter needed 22 May - 10 Jul 2017**

Introduction

145 Bill and I are going on a 7 week tour of the US and Canada and while we are away we would love someone to look after our beautiful home with tropical gardens and our lovely 14 year old Belgian shepherd called Neffie. We both still work but are getting closer to retirement; Bill is a Manager and I am a design manager for a property company. We have never had a house sitter before but are really excited about having someone care for and enjoy our home in our absence.

Our Home & Location

150 We have a single level house with a pool set in tropical gardens. There are several outdoor sitting areas to enjoy. Our two guest rooms have a queen and king beds and our house sitters can enjoy a spacious bathroom including a bath. Our home sits in a quiet neighbourhood street close to our local shopping centre Wynnum Plaza and the impressive Westfield Carindale 20 minutes drive away. We are close to Manly harbour with lots of outdoor dining and beautiful mangrove walking tracks along the Wynnum foreshore. There are 3 train stations within a handy 15 minute drive and can be at Southbank within 30 minutes.

Responsibilities & Pets

160 We would like our house sitters to be able to water our gardens weekly, mow the lawn as required, collect mail daily and maintain the pool and generally just to keep an eye on all working components such as pool filters and solar inverter. We have a cleaner who will come once a fortnight so only light general cleaning would need to be maintained. And most importantly we would like our pooch to be fed, given her medication and cuddled frequently.