

SOFT SKILLS FOR 'HARD' TRADES

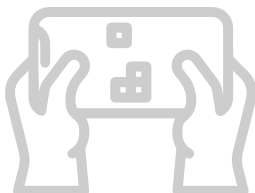
Soft skills are touted as some of the most essential tools a worker in the modern age can have up their sleeve.

They're all the skills and talents that aren't technical, physical, tangible things – it's good communication, empathy for your fellow people, turning up to work on time. Usually summed up as having a 'good work ethic', soft skills are now extremely sought-after by employers, even those in more technically-dominated industries like trades.

So if soft skills aren't just for marketing execs and HR officials, how can you increase them without needing to get a degree in Fine Arts and still maintaining your technical skills? Here's our handy little list of ways to strengthen your soft skills without too much softening up.

Play some **GAMES**

Board games, club sports, video games, even pub trivia – it all helps develop a lot of vital soft skills, including crucial ones like analytical reasoning, problem solving, and crisis resolution.



think things through before you do them – stopping the problems before they even start!

Leveraging your weekly hobbies into a discussion on how you've learned how to solve problems and work things out in your head in a rational, logical way can go a really long way in an interview: it proves that you're the kind of person who will try your hardest to solve things that could go wrong, and that you're likely to

Get **READING**

It might seem simple, but being widely read is one of the easiest ways to develop a lot of the core skills.



It's a great thing to throw into a cover letter or sprinkle into an interview conversation as well, as many employers might look on it with respect and appreciation.

They don't have to be artsy poetic books, either. Fantasy novels like Lord of the Rings or Game of Thrones will give you a different grasp of our language. Autobiographies of sports stars can often lead to interesting conversations with others. Books on history (whether it's ancient or modern) give you perspective on your life and an insight into politics without needing to get too political. And there's even some philosophy books out there which aren't focused with getting too cerebral – try Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance to pick up a couple philosophical thoughts and arguments while also learning a bit about mechanics, family, and American history.

Chat to **PEOPLE**

We don't just mean your family or your mates.



Going out of your way to have a yarn with someone whose perspective you haven't really considered before is a great way to practice empathy and communication. And you might learn something you'd never have expected, which is a skill all by itself.

Try weaving your newly-learned cultural trivia into your next job interview – we promise they'll be pretty impressed.

Try heading up to someone who's from a different background, a different age group, a different religion or in a different industry and asking them a couple questions about life, the universe and everything. Keeping an open mind when it comes to new experiences shows a high emotional intelligence, and will help with being able to connect with other workers and management in new workplaces. Plus, you get to learn new things.

Take on extra **TRAINING**

Asking your boss if you can take on some business leadership courses will not only make you a better employee and give you some lifelong skills that you can take with you wherever you go.



You'll be surprised where you might be able to use the stuff you learn as well, whether its in your home with your family, with your mates or during your weekend sports. The possibilities are fully endless even beyond looking good on a resume.

Your boss will get to write it off as a business expense most of the time, and be happy because your performance will increase: you'll be thrilled because you've just made yourself a heap more hireable as a worker, and you might even be able to negotiate yourself a raise because of it. That's what we call a win-win.

So what are you **WAITING FOR?**

At Apprenticeship Support Australia, we have a team of Apprentice Advisors who specialise in helping you navigate the minefield of job interviews and applications.

Find out more about an apprenticeship here and register for a free career consultation at <https://www.apprenticeshipsupport.com.au/Register-for-a-free-career-consultation> or call **1300 363 831**