You finished library school; you panicked about finding a job in this terrible economy; you spent many a late night pouring over cover letters and the proper formatting of your CV; maybe you even drank a little more cheap red wine than usual*; but in the end, you finally landed that coveted academic librarian position that you’d always dreamed of. Congratulations! Perhaps you have a cubicle, or, if you’re one of the lucky ones, an office with a door to call your own. Have you found yourself sitting in said office, saying to yourself, “Now what?” as you watch videos on YouTube? Do you feel like it’s taking you awhile to find your librarian groove? Here are some tips for avoiding that early job inertia.

- Get to know EVERYONE in the library, even if they don’t work for the library. Staff, professional, faculty, whatever the hierarchy may be, everyone in your organization is important and worth knowing better, from the cleaning staff to the director.
- Meet people from other departments – faculty workshops, friends of friends, neighbors who also happen to be professors, etc. It’s a good opportunity to promote the work your library does and, conversely, to get an outside perspective on what your library can be doing better to serve the faculty and students.
- Figure out where you “fit”, officially (i.e. know your job description) and unofficially within your department, library, campus, and community.
- Find a mentor. This person doesn’t have to work at your library, but it’s helpful if they work in a similar field. He or she can be a great source of new ideas, someone to bounce your ideas off of, or someone who simply provides encouragement after a bad day at work.
- Go to conferences and, more importantly, present at conferences – poster sessions, roundtable discussions, workshops, etc. If you’re timid about presenting alone, find a coworker or someone you studied with to present with you.
- Network. Librarians can be shy creatures, but if you want to know what’s going on in your field, you have to get out there and talk to the people in your field who are making things happen. Academic libraries are a small world, and chances are the people you meet will be friends of friends or part of your alumni network. Just because librarians are shy doesn’t mean they’re unfriendly!
- Keep up with emerging trends and common practices in your field. This means reading library scholarship (blogs, journals, etc.) and taking advantage of online workshops and webinars that can benefit you and your library.
- Plan to be at your library for one year while simultaneously planning to be there for 20+ years. With budget cuts and restructuring, you can never be 100% assured of your job. Be ready to leave if you have to, but also be prepared to make a career out of your first job.
- Take advantage of continuing education opportunities to pursue job-related and personal interests.

*See Steven Hoover’s great article on the job search if you’re still in this panic/limbo mode: Surviving your first job search, or, What I Had To Learn the Hard Way, Reproduced Here, for You, So That You Are Not Driven To Drink as Well - http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6697547.html?nid=463