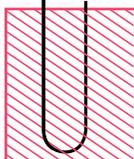




# CAREER SWITCH

Long hours, zero job satisfaction and a major health drain. If this sounds like your career, be inspired by the women on this regular career page who ditched the day job to start afresh.



## CURRICULUM VITAE

Amelia Rope, 43, chocolatier and founder of Amelia Rope Chocolate ([ameliarope.com](http://ameliarope.com))

**PREVIOUS JOB:** Medical Practice Manager  
**SALARY:** £50,000  
**HOURS:** 60 per week (plus weekends)

**CURRENT JOB:** Chocolatier  
**SALARY:** £35,000 to £40,000  
**HOURS:** 60 per week (flexible)

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

I used to work as a manager at a doctor's surgery. Every morning I'd wake up anxious about the day ahead. I worked 12-hour days, had no time to exercise and ate for comfort. I was earning more than lots of my friends but I was miserable. On bad days, I'd sit at my desk and dream of starting my own food business. The moment my boss hired a life coach to speak to the team was a turning point. At 35, I found my self-belief and applied to be on the 2006 series of *MasterChef*.

### CURRENT JOB

I survived almost until the end of the competition, but I didn't win. Yet John Torode's encouragement that I should train rang in my ears. I asked to go part time at work and signed up for a course with legendary chocolatier Valrhona in France. The first truffles I created were with mint from my mum's garden. For the first two years, I worked part time in my old job and didn't draw a salary from the business, putting 100% of profits back in. I began with truffles and chocolate-dipped flowers, which I sold online. To save money, I moved in with my brother. Things took off when I launched my chocolate bars, which were snapped up by Selfridges in 2010. I now stock stores such as Fortnum & Mason and Liberty. The feeling you get when you win a new client is amazing.

### ABOUT ME

I still work long hours, but from home (my own now, thankfully). My days are filled with creating recipes, designing packaging and tasting chocolate. Being my own boss means I do my own hours and fit exercise around my schedule. I do yoga for relaxation and cross-training every other day. I've even lost weight – surprising seeing as I eat one of my 100g bars every day!



## REFERENCES

Switch up your career with Amelia's three essential tips

#### Take a course in book-keeping

Kaplan Financial has a two-day course that can be completed online – it's perfect for anyone new to the world of business accounts, like me (£190, financial.kaplan.co.uk).

#### Perfect your chef skills

For expert help in the art of making chocolates, try William Curley in London. You can do a superb one-day truffle-making class (£75, williamcurley.co.uk).

#### Learn from the best

If you're thinking of starting a food business read *Sweet Dreams: The Story Of Green & Blacks* by Craig Sams and Josephine Fairley. It's great for first-time entrepreneurs. **WIZ**