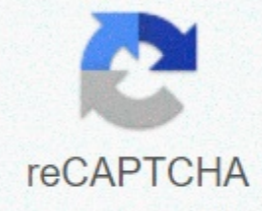




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Men's 6.5 converted to women's

Almost a third of working women nationwide now out-earn their husbands. It was inevitable, really. With more women than men going to college, with women taking less time out from careers to raise children, with more women choosing careers that only a few years ago were the province of men, better jobs and better money have become available to them. There are no "rules" for managing this change. At the present time, every couple in which the woman is the primary wage earner is very much on its own, inventing a family life that is radically different from that which they knew growing up. Often, the partners are surprised to find that each clings to their "traditional" role, even when such roles are no longer practical or even humane; a woman who puts in a 13-hour day at the office simply can't come home and do the laundry too. And yet, redistributing roles and responsibilities in a family is not as simple as saying, "You take out the garbage, I'll sweep the floor." It often gets down to people's core beliefs about who they are and what they need to be doing to be a real grown-up man or woman. The reactions people have to such things are often distressingly irrational, even to themselves! People who study relationships are, of course, studying this phenomenon as well. They are finding that, although men with working wives are taking on more housework than ever before, they still lag behind by five hours a week! In families where there are children, the gap is even wider, with women spending 17 more hours per week doing childcare and home chores. It is only when a woman's paycheck approaches an equal dollar amount to her husband's that the husband pitches in more. Curiously, some researchers have found that once a wife's income is actually greater than her husband's, he tends to be less and less involved at home and that couples are more likely to reassert traditional roles if the balance between earning power is tipped too much toward the woman. Perhaps women still need to think that they can rely on men to take care of them. Perhaps men need to feel that they are still the "head of household" to feel like a man. The issue merits further study. Whatever the reasons, if you are the first couple in your family's history in which the woman out-earns the man, here are some tips to give you a hand: Remember that you are pioneers. Few people have been raised in families where Mom out-earned Dad or where Mom was a CEO while Dad stayed home with the kids. As a matter of fact, most people presently in the work force were raised in families where Dad not only made most of the money but also made most of the important decisions. It's true that a man's ability to single-handedly support his family was a point of pride a generation ago. It is also true that a perk that came with making the money was an assumption that the husband therefore had the right to a greater say in family life. However unhappy people were with the arrangement, there was a certain sense that Dad was supposed to be the head of the household and everyone else's roles fell into line behind his. Not so today. Even the most entrenched traditionalist knows, on some level, that such rigid ideas about who does what have to be reconsidered when the woman is slugging it out in the workplace just like her spouse. As a culture, we're still working this out. Keep in mind that the workload, not the players, is the problem. The most important attitude for a couple to maintain in this situation is that they are in it together. The problem is trying to manage the crushing load of two jobs, two kids, and a mountain of laundry. The problem is not who is making what salary. Work together to figure out what needs to get done each week to keep the children safe and happy and the household orderly and running smoothly. Get beyond what each of you thinks the other should be doing and focus on how you both will get everything done in a way that is fair to everyone. Keep money out of chore talk. Face it — it doesn't matter if one partner is making \$22,000 a year and the other is making \$220,000. You are both working and you are both putting in 40-plus hours each week to get your paychecks. Hopefully, you are both doing something that matters to you. Probably neither one has more free time than the other. Keep talking! These problems don't get solved in a single conversation. Nor can you assume that the distribution of household chores, money, and decision-making power will just work itself out on its own. These issues are fraught with emotion. Each partner is consciously dealing with old role models, their own and their parents' expectations for what it means to be successful, and their own and generations' worth of opinions about what it means to be a real man or a real woman. This isn't easy stuff. And it often comes out in frankly weird ways. You may think you are only talking about who is going to stay home with Junior, who has the chickenpox. But if the discussion gets heated, it becomes a forum for who is the better parent, who cares more, who has the less important job, or who is indispensable at work. Take a deep breath and try to own up to those more complicated feelings. Partners need to be friends who provide comfort and support as they both explore such deep and emotional territory. Talk about financial decision-making. In prior generations, moneymaking dictated who would make financial decisions. Pioneering couples need to discuss how financial decisions will be made — preferably when there is no pressing decision on the table. Talk about how decisions were made in your own family of origin and the consequences of this approach. Take the time to outline some policy decisions about who has say about what kinds of decisions and about what kinds of dollar amounts. What money belongs to whom? What bank accounts do you need? Who has access to what funds? How are bills to be paid? What kinds of decisions are left up to the individual and which need to be discussed by the couple? Again, if the discussion gets emotional, know that you aren't talking about finances anymore. You are talking about much deeper issues. Don't hesitate to get professional help. It is indeed very sad when money issues erode what is otherwise a good relationship. Good relationships are certainly hard enough to find. Know that the issues around money and power are old and deep for most people. If you find yourselves getting into repeated and heated arguments about money, decisions, and household tasks, don't leap to the conclusion that the problem is your partner (See Tip #2). You may need an objective counselor to help you sort out the feelings, attitudes, and behaviors that you each bring to the situation. A good therapist can help you get back on the same team. Last medically reviewed on May 17, 2016 Keep up with the latest daily buzz with the BuzzFeed Daily newsletter! There is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to footwear (that would have saved us a lot of time on our online shoe returns). So, wearing a size eight in Docs doesn't necessarily mean you're the same size in shoes from other brands. Apart from the brand, the material plays into the fit, as well as if the shoe is marked for "men" or for "women." Obviously, shoes don't have sex assigned at birth, so those measurements mean nothing in regards to which shoe you "should" wear. But, until brands stop categorizing their sizes according to a limited gender binary, it's helpful to know how to convert the sizes and how best to fit your foot as you shop. So if you're shopping for a new pair of shoes, whether it be oxfords or loafers, we're here to help. Once you find a style that suits your taste, the next step is to ensure your comfort. Below are a few guidelines to finding the best fit. Keep reading for how to convert men's and women's shoe sizes. Knowing your companion shoe size can expand your options, not only in terms of style but also if you struggle with finding shoes that fit. This is especially true because "men's" shoes usually come in longer and wider styles, while "women's" shoes come in sizes that tend to be shorter and more narrow. A size nine in a "men's" shoe is not the same as a nine in "women's." However, the formula for converting those sizes from one to the other is relatively straightforward. To get your "men's" shoe size, subtract two sizes from the U.S. "women's" shoe size From U.S. "men's" sizing, add to sizes to get to your U.S. "women's" size (i.e. a U.S. "women's" size eight is a U.S. "men's" six) Size conversion for sneakers is slightly different but still won't require that you whip out the calculator. From U.S. "women's" sizing, simply subtract a size and a half to determine your "men's" sneaker size From U.S. "men's" sizing, add a size and a half to determine your size in U.S. "women's" sneakers (i.e a U.S. "women's" size eight will find a comfortable fit in a U.S. "men's" size six and a half sneaker) Klaus Vedfelt/Getty Images There's no doubt that these conversion guidelines come in handy, but it's worth noting it's a rule of thumb and not an exact science. Shoe sizes can vary quite a bit from brand to brand and even between styles by the same company. Trying on a pair of shoes in the store is still the best way to nail the right size. But in case you can't get to the store—or you've just succumbed to the convenience of online shopping—there's a solution: Simply measure your feet and then compare measurements against the shoe size chart provided on the brand's website. Keep in mind that it's not just about length, but width, as well. You might find you need to go down an additional half or full size if the shoe is too broad. If you can, consider ordering a pair of shoes in two different sizes to get the fit that's not too big and not too small, but just right. Make sure to check out the retailer's return policy first before you go ordering away (a lesson we learned the hard way). When Gozde Aksay moved from Seattle to New York City in 2010 to work for a big financial firm, she was so excited to get the offer, she didn't negotiate her salary or think to inquire what others in her position made. "I didn't really know how expensive New York City was, so when HR asked what I wanted, I said a number, and they said, 'Alright,'" the 31-year-old software developer recalls. "Throughout my employment that base salary stuck with me, and I didn't get a promotion because they always told us the company wasn't doing any better after the crisis." A few months later, a male co-worker in her department accidentally revealed his salary in a conversation. "I realized he was making 30% more than me," she says. While Aksay stops short of calling her lower salary the result of gender discrimination, her experience was unsettling. She ultimately left the firm. "I did feel I dealt with salary inequality," she says. "I now can see that I should have negotiated my salary when joining [the firm]." While Aksay didn't try to negotiate for pay equivalent to that of her male colleague, the experience inspired her to create Salary Fairy, a crowdsourcing platform and career site that offers personalized salary predictions based on job type and other variables. Related: What Are Your "High-Earning Years"? A Guide to Your Pay in Your 20s, 30s, and 40s But unfortunately, Aksay's experience is all too common. You've probably heard that a full-time working woman makes 77 cents for every dollar a man makes. That stat is a major talking point of not only equal-pay advocacy organizations but of President Obama and Congressional Democrats. Recently, a New Yorker article about the firing of former New York Times executive editor Jill Abramson, which suggested she was let go after she raised concerns about being paid less than her male predecessor, has only amplified the national conversation. Here, we offer some advice for women who are concerned about not getting paid on par with their male colleagues—and tips on how to bridge the wage gap. According to the latest U.S. Census figures, the typical American woman working at least 35 hours a week, year-round, earned 77.1% of what the typical American man did. What's more alarming is that the number hasn't changed much since 2001, and since then has ranged from 75.2% to 77.8%. That amounts to a yearly wage gap of \$11,607 between full-time working men and women. And for women of color, the wage gap is larger. African American women are paid, on average, 64 cents, and Latinas are paid just 54 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men (here's the state-by-state breakdown). What's worse is that once women are paid poorly, usually because they don't negotiate a better salary, the cycle of being paid less continues over a lifetime. "The lack of negotiating compounds over a career since most employers ask for previous pay and base their offer on it," says Katie Donovan, founder of Equal Pay Negotiations, which specializes in counseling on what jobs should pay. "The difference grows and grows till the gap gets into the twenties by the time a woman is in her late thirties." There are many theories from sociologists and economists on why this is happening—some say women often lack the confidence to ask for what they're worth; others contend that male bosses may be subconsciously sexist and undervalue women. Regardless of the reason, it's women and their families who feel the greatest loss. The Paycheck Fairness Act—which would provide more pay transparency in the workplace and measures to encourage better pay for women—was proposed earlier this year, but was blocked in the Senate on a cloture vote. "We know that millions of women in virtually every occupation are paid less than men," says Vicki Shabo, a vice president at the National Partnership for Women and Families. "The gender pay gap wage differential is a tremendous and enduring problem, not just for women being paid less but for families' economic security. This has lasting impacts throughout the year." If you accepted the first offer, you are underpaid; if they gave you your desired salary without any pushback, you are underpaid. Knowing What You're Worth Whether a woman has a hunch she's not making as much as her male buddies for the same job, or she wonders if she could be making more, if she didn't do her research before accepting the job offer, there's a chance she isn't pulling in what she's worth. "If you accepted the first offer, you are underpaid; if they gave you your desired salary without any pushback, you are underpaid," Donovan says, adding that websites such as salary.com or glassdoor.com offer information about how much different positions pay in every geographic area of the country. In 2011 those sites were a huge help to 33-year-old Molly Celaschi, a marketing director who lives and works in the San Francisco Bay Area, after she overheard various conversations at a previous firm about a male colleague who was making significantly more than she was. "I started researching online, like through Glass Door and Salary.com," says Celaschi, who specializes in entertainment and high-tech marketing. "I realized I was making almost \$20K less than the norm." While you may be underpaid right now, the good news is you don't have to storm your boss's office and picket for equal rights in order to get a raise. The key to getting more, according to Celaschi and Donovan, is not to get into gender politics (even if you are angry). Here are the steps to take to get the salary or raise that you deserve: 1. Start with an online search. Use the aforementioned sites to search typical salaries, or ask your peers in the same profession what they make. By knowing what someone in your desired position is worth, you'll have a better idea of whether a prospective employer is lowballing you. "You need to become a good consumer of jobs," says Donovan. "Spend just as much time and effort [researching your job] as you do in researching the price of gas, a car, a vacation. Just like researching the price of things, you can find out the price of jobs." 2. Ask around. Go beyond the internet too. If, for example, you're interviewing with a large or well-known company, Donovan suggests asking people in the industry if that company pays poorly, average or well. Another idea: Call a headhunter. "Tell them what you do and what you are paid," says Donovan. "Then ask, 'Can I do better?' If you can, you'll have just confirmed your suspicion and started a job search. Check with the professional or trade association for your job or industry. Many do research on pay and benefits. Do this annually because job markets fluctuate, just like homes." 3. Prep before talking to your boss. If you're already employed and suspect (or know) you're getting paid less, pull together some evidence—such as sales data or other statistics relevant to how you impact the company's bottom line—to show how you've gone above and beyond at your job. After arming herself with salary data, Celaschi emailed her C.E.O. and requested a quick meeting. "I prepared for the meeting by pulling my and my team's stats for the past six months, estimating what the next six months of stats would look like, and listing the actions I was taking to get there." She then asked for a raise—and ended up with a 20% salary boost. 4. Focus on job performance. "The goal is for you to be paid appropriately, so focus on what that is and show that you have researched it," says Donovan. "I recommend starting by asking about your job performance. Get management to say how great you are and then say, 'I'm glad you agree that I am a strong employee. That is why I was so surprised to find out how underpaid I am compared to the market norm. What can we do to fix that?' At some point use the words 'salary adjustment.' That bounces things out of typical raise mentality." 5. Stick to the facts. In obtaining her raise, Celaschi didn't get emotional or mention that she made less than her male peers, or accuse her C.E.O. of being sexist. She simply made a case for what she was worth. "I think I earned more respect from my peers and especially the C.E.O. by taking this initiative," she says. "After that, raises and even bonuses were never an issue. It became the first time in my life I made almost six figures as a single woman. I learned that if you feel you deserve something, speak up for yourself. No one else is going to fight that battle for you. And if you do not get what you want? Walk." This article originally appeared in LearnVest and is reprinted with permission.

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