

## Top Ten Tips for Living in the Expat Community

Living in an international community brings with it many exciting opportunities for individuals, couples and families. As this fair exemplifies, the expat community has much to offer and benefit from. But expat living can be a challenge.

**Vivamus Psychologists**  
While we live, let us live

[www.vivamuspsychologists.nl](http://www.vivamuspsychologists.nl)  
[www.vivamuspsychologists.co.uk](http://www.vivamuspsychologists.co.uk)

---

### 1. Feeling under the weather?

Don't let the weather get the better of you. Many expats come from places where the sun shines more often than it does here. Getting used to a Northern European climate can quite literally leave people feeling under the weather. Don't stop your usual pace of life. You may need to adjust your usual activities to accommodate early dusk. Cold days don't have to mean hibernation. Invite friends over for dinner, catch up on films you've been meaning to see. Stay active. Don't wait for summer before you start acting on your plans – you could be waiting a long time.

---

### 2. Make use of modern technology

With Skype, Facebook and email it is easier than ever to stay in touch with friends and family back home. Social networking sites, such as Twitter, can help you to build and maintain a network of people. Using modern technology in this way helps to protect against feelings of isolation.

---

### 3. Find out about the place

The more you find out about your new town and country, the more you will feel connected to it and better able to enjoy it. What are the local history, background and culture of The Hague and The Netherlands? What is the food like, what is there to do here?

---

### 4. Invite friends and family to come and stay

It's important to maintain a balance between making new friends and maintaining established connections. Inviting people to visit you can help keep this balance. Spending time with people who really know you can help to sustain your sense of self.

---

### 5. Keep your identity

When people move to another country to accompany their spouse, partner or parent, those accompanying others can sometimes feel their sense of self is threatened. Think about who you are. What is it that makes you you? By first defining your identity you can then take steps to protect it. What's important to you? Work, family, friendships, hobbies? Once you're worked out what helps maintain your identity, make sure it's in your life here.



---

### 6. Invest

You've made the decision to move to The Netherlands, now it's time to follow this decision through. The more energy you invest into being in The Netherlands, the more you will get out of your time here. Don't expect Holland to come to you. What enriched your life before you moved here? Perhaps it was a particular hobby, occupation, involvement in cultural activities, friendships? Invest in those things here. Perhaps you could join a gym, a toddler group or a language class? Often those living in an expat community feel that friendships are much more meaningful than they are at home because friends become like family.

---

## 7. Learn from yourself

Have you been in this situation before? Or a similar situation where you found yourself without your usual networks? What worked that time? What wasn't helpful? Repeat the things that were helpful last time round and don't waste time on the things that hindered you last time.

---

## 8. Accept the process

Moving to a new country can be hard. It is unlikely that you will wake up one day suddenly feeling integrated and settled – it is a gradual process. Try and notice the pointers along the way. What are the indicators that you are more settled this month than you were last month?

---

## 9. Travel

Being situated in The Netherlands may well open up many opportunities for travel to places that seemed too far away before. Planning trips to nearby European cities is an exciting way to make the most of your new home. If finances allow, you could plan a trip home too, but not too soon after arriving. It is good to have a trip home to look forward to but you need to give yourself time to settle first.

---

## 10. Talking things through

Talking things through with friends or family can be particularly valuable and helps you to realise you are not alone in feeling this way. If you are finding settling into your life in The Netherlands particularly difficult or if this is affecting other areas of your life, you could consider getting professional help from a psychologist.

---

### Vivamus Psychologists

KvK number: 27379240

+31 (0) 6 557 33325

+44 (0) 7900 285561

info@vivamuspsychologists.co.uk

www.vivamuspsychologists.nl

www.vivamuspsychologists.co.uk

---

# VIVAMUS

Psychological  
Therapies

# Top Ten Tips Living in the Expat Community

While  
we live,  
let us  
live...

