



**How to
deal with
cultureshock**



Phase 1 - the honeymoon phase

To do:

→ *Nothing except enjoying all these new experiences!*

Moving to a different country with a different culture asks for a lot of adjustment. No matter how well you prepare yourself for the move, a so-called culture shock is mostly unavoidable for you, your partner or your family.

Experienced experts say it is important to recognize this shock and to realize it is only a phase you have to go through. To help you with this we have described the five stages of a culture shock to help you recognize the symptoms. Per phase we give you a few tips and tricks to help you get through each phase successfully, hopefully helping you in feeling at home in your new country as soon as possible.

During a honeymoon you are blinded by love and you can't find any flaws in your new partner. This is usually what happens during an international move as well. You just arrived in your new homeland and you're filled with enthusiasm and excitement. Everything is fun at that moment: your new house, the people, the area, the work, the food, everything. This phase usually lasts several weeks.



Phase 2 - rejection

To do:

→ *As hard as it is, accept that things are different from now on in your new homeland. If you keep comparing it to the things you had before, the longing will only grow and you won't be able to start feeling at home. Talk to your new colleagues and friends about the differences and about your feelings so they can understand you a bit better. However, don't try to force your way of thinking upon them. Adjust your (too high) expectations of your new homeland if needed to avoid disappointment.*

The first cracks in your love for your new home start to appear. Slowly but surely you start to notice more differences between your new home and your old home, and even though you don't want to admit it, you'll start to feel annoyed with these differences. Usually there may have been a miscommunication at work or in your new circle of friends that will make you long for your old home. Anger, frustration, loneliness and the feeling of being misunderstood that are connected to this are completely normal.

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Phase 3 - general adjustment

To do:

→ *Don't pressure yourself too much. Accept that it takes time to fully adjust and give yourself plenty of time to do so. Understand that building new friendships takes time and it is important to talk to other people about what you are going through.*

Even though there are still small things that bother you, you're starting to feel more at home. Adjusting to the daily life is taking less and less effort to do, but you still feel like an outsider. This can have multiple reasons, like not having a connection with the locals.

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Phase 4 - thorough adjustment

To do:

→ *Even though in some situations it might be easier to get mad, during this phase it is good to try to figure out why the locals act the way they do. Immerse yourself in your new culture with an open mind, don't look at it from your old perspective. Don't be prejudiced, realize your old culture had lesser sides as well. And definitely don't expect the locals to adjust to you.*

After all the previous frustrations you've finally settled in your new environment. Your work and your family are back on top. Life is back to normal, or so it seems. But at certain moments there is still a nagging feeling. Especially because of frustrations you start to notice the differences again and it upsets you. You try your hardest to accept the differences, but sometimes you still long to how things were before you moved.

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Phase 5 - adjustment

To do:

→ *Nothing, just enjoy life every day and keep being amazed by all the beautiful differences on planet earth.*

Finally, the storm has settled and you have arrived at the final phase of the culture shock. During this phase you feel like a part of your new culture and you have even taken over some of the habits. You now see that your old culture had good and bad sides.

The distance between your old and new home grows larger by the minute. You're not the same person you were before, and now you are able to see both cultures objectively.

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As hard as it may seem, always be aware that it is just a phase and it will pass. A culture shock is very common and it happens to the best of us. Even though the phases have been described in chronological order, it could happen you keep shifting between two certain phases. This is also very normal and has been experienced by many.

Are you unable to get through the phases and does it have too much of an effect on you physically or mentally? Then always contact a doctor or a therapist when going through a culture shock to help make the process easier. They are happy to help you in a proper fashion.

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About De Haan relocation

De Haan was founded in 1777. The organisation takes care of relocation services all over the world. In the past years De Haan has helped over 500.000 customers get to their desired location. De Haan is part of FIDI and has a worldwide network of over 1.300 partners. The organization is certified in accordance to the highest quality certificates, such as ISO 9001, ISO 27001, ISO 14001, AEO and FAIM. Currently, De Haan has around 80 employees.



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