

Twitter Tips for Beginners: 4 Steps to Success

Step 1 - Follow

As soon as you've signed up, find people you want to follow. Look at who they are following and check out their Twitter 'streams'. If you find those people interesting, then follow them yourself and read their tweets for a while. People will usually follow you back as it is courteous to do so. The same rule applies when people follow you- always follow them back, unless they seem dodgy- you can always un-follow them again at a later stage.

Step 2- How to 'tweet'

This may look difficult, but is actually fairly straight forward.

- The @ symbol is used for replies to someone else. For example, your reply to me would be written as **@utewking** (utewking is my twitter id)
- A private message (or direct message) to me is written as **D utewking**
- Use **RT @utewking** for a retweet (forward) if you want to forward someone else's post to your followers.
- Always shorten links by using a website like www.bitly.com as you don't want to exceed the 140 characters you have for your tweet.
- It is useful to stick to about 120 characters in total, which leaves enough space if other people want to reply to or retweet the post.

Step 3- Engage

If you like what someone you follow has posted, click on the "reply" button and add your opinion. Alternatively if you think your followers will like a post you have read, use the "retweet" function. This shows that you are attentive, care about what people say and 'engage' with others, This is really what Twitter is all about.

Step 4 – Observe the Twitter etiquette

For example, the originator of a post you've retweeted will usually thank you and this will start to build a connection. They may then retweet your posts in return, providing they are of interest to their followers. Self promotion isn't very good etiquette- it will either just get ignored by followers or worse, people will unfollow the 'offender'. Tweet what you think will be of interest to other people, and remember to share information and links to interesting websites.



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