

The
Liberated
Woman



*Starting Over
In Dubai*

Starting Over in Dubai: Daily Life Essentials & Smart Tips for Women Rebuilding Life After Abuse

This guide is designed for women beginning again in Dubai - setting up a new home, organising daily life, and navigating this season with wisdom, care, and resourcefulness.

1. Housing: Apartment, Studio, Villa or Townhouse?

Considerations before choosing:

- Location close to school, work, or metro (saves time & transport costs)
- Can the school bus reach the area?
- Will your nanny/helper be able to commute there?
- Is the area safe and quiet for you and the kids?
- If you are estranged from your ex-partner, engage with the security team

Negotiating tips:

- Speak directly to the landlord or ask the agent to pass on your story. Briefly explain your situation - some will reduce rent or accept flexible payments.
- Negotiate the agent fee (standard is 5%, but some may agree to 3-4%).
- Deposit: Ask to issue a cheque with a future date if you need time to gather funds.
- Look in Facebook groups (e.g., Real Mums of Dubai, Dubai Single Moms, Expat Women UAE) -some individuals rent directly without agent fees.

Extra housing costs to plan for:

House Deposit - 5% of annual rent

Agent Fee - 5% (negotiable)

DEWA Activation - 2,000–4,000 refundable deposit

Chiller / AC - Some buildings charge monthly and deposit sometimes is required

Gas Connection - 300–600 setup

Internet/WiFi - 300–500/month

Ejari Registration - 220AED

Furniture - Check free groups or Pay It Forward

Rent websites: Bayut, Property Finder, Dubizzle

2. Maintenance: House & Car

House Maintenance:

- Ask if the landlord includes AC cleaning and plumbing repairs.
- Keep a small fund for basic handyman services (100–250 AED per visit).
- AC cleaning every 6–12 months.

Car Maintenance:

- Budget annually for:
- Oil change
- Battery replacement
- Insurance renewal
- Registration renewal
- Consider monthly car rental if uncertain about staying long-term.
- For affordable car maintenance contact Mahmood he will collect your car and return it for you. 055 379 7070

Car rentals: OneClickDrive, Hertz UAE

3. Transportation Options

- Metro/Buses: Safe, clean, affordable (Nol card system).
- Taxi/Careem/Uber: Great for emergencies or short trips.
- Car rental (monthly): AED 1,200–1,800/month.
- Buy a car: Start around AED 10,000+ (used), plus insurance.

Tip: If you rent a car, make sure insurance, maintenance, and registration are included.

4. Water, WiFi, and Utilities

Water:

- Bottled water delivery: AED 8–15 per 6 bottles.
- Filter option: Cheaper long-term.
- Brands: Tappie Filters, Waterdrop, Noon, Amazon.

WiFi & Phones:

- Providers: Etisalat, Du, Virgin Mobile
- Annual mobile plan with Virgin can save money.
- Prepaid is flexible if budget is tight.
- Ask for bundle deals (WiFi + TV + phone).

Required documents: Ejari, Emirates ID, and valid visa.

5. Cleaning & Household Upkeep (optional)

- AC Cleaning: Every 6–12 months. (Budget AED 200–500)
- Car Wash: AED 20–40 at petrol stations.
- House Help:
- Weekly cleaner (AED 30–45/hour via apps: UrbanCompany, JustLife)
- Ask trusted mums in groups for private options.

6. Affordable Shopping & Household Supplies

- Kibsons: Online fresh produce & groceries with discounts.
- Viva: Low-budget supermarket with household staples.
- Gate Warehouse (Hessa Street): Affordable home goods.
- Sharjah/Dubai Markets: Great for bulk and budget items.
- Temu: School supplies, kids' tools, small home items.
- Pay It Forward / Free Cycle / RealMumsOfDubai: Free or used items.

Tip: Keep a wishlist of what you urgently need. Ask in groups or friends' circles.

7. Insurance & Health Support

Health Insurance:

- Check what's covered: alternative therapies (massage), dental, emergency, psychology/coaching maternity etc-if you are working, check if your employer offers an Employee Assistance Program
- Basic individual coverage starts at AED 800–1,200/year.

8. Legal Documents & Visas

You'll need:

- Ejari (lease registration)
- Valid visa (residence or freelance)
- Bank account with a cheque book

Visa Options:

- Dubai or other emirates (prices vary slightly)
- Freelancer visa: AED 5,500–12,000/year
- Golden Visa: Check eligibility for long-term stability

Freelance options: GoFreelance, Virtuzone/Sharjah Publishing Freezone

9. Career & Income

CV Help:

- Use ChatGPT to refine your resume.
- Find free templates on Canva or Zety.

Job Search:

- Websites: LinkedIn, Bayt, Gulftalent
- Facebook & WhatsApp groups:
- Women-only job groups
- Industry-specific communities

Questions to reflect on:

- What experience or skills can you offer now?
- What work can fit with childcare needs?

10. Emergency Childcare & Support

- Ask other mums in school groups about nannies for emergencies.
- Some agencies offer hourly emergency babysitting.
- Keep a few trusted contacts saved for last-minute situations.

11. Free Healing & Support Resources

- Ask your GP or kids' school counsellor for therapy referrals.
- Join The Liberated Woman Safe space www.theliberatedwoman.org
- Facebook Groups: Search "free healing," "domestic abuse recovery UAE," or your nationality's support pages.
- Some centers offer monthly free group therapy or workshops. Lighthouse Arabia/Saudi German Hospital
- Look into community wellness groups.

12. Free Support Group (household items) & Discounts to look for:

- Pay It Forward Dubai
- Real Mums of Dubai
- Single Moms UAE
- Local community WhatsApp groups — ask trusted friends to post on your behalf if you're worried about your identity

Tip: Create a wishlist (written or in your notes app) for furniture, clothes, or items you're missing.

13. Smart Organization & Others

- Keep a physical or digital “Life Folder”:
- Contracts
- Utility bills
- Cheque copies
- Ejari, visa, insurance
- Emergency contacts
- Review all financial commitments every 6 months.
- Don’t hesitate to ask for discounts, payment plans, or flexible terms.
- Ask: “Is there a more affordable package?”
- Many will offer if you ask clearly and with some background.

14. Banking

If you have an existing account or any debt speak to them about your situation-some banks have domestic abuse policies in place to help victims

WIO bank -you do not need your husband's or partner's permission to open

This guide is not just about surviving - it’s about rebuilding a life of stability, strength, and grace.