

How to work from home

The global COVID-19 pandemic has thousands if not millions of people suddenly working remotely, trying to juggle their workload with their home life, not to mention anxiety about the future.

But while working from home might be new to you, some have been doing it for years.

Here are their tips on making remote work easier.

Go easy on yourself

While transitioning from office life can be difficult under regular circumstances, it's important to remember this is not a normal situation.

For the first week or so... listen to what you need for yourself. Managers should be understanding during this time as staff adjust to the situation.

A lot of people are having to process the emotional aspect of this as well as the fear and the uncertainty.

Don't try to replicate your office schedule at home

With that in mind, it's not sustainable to try to keep your 9-to-5 office schedule at home. For one, you might be dealing with children who are also stuck at home.

It is, however, an opportunity to figure out a schedule that works for you.

For example, doing work in 90-minute bursts of productivity and then taking a break may work well for you.

Our productivity goes up and down throughout the day, we've got to figure out a new normal.

Set the mood

You may have a home office, or a room that can be transformed into one, or you might find yourself setting up your laptop at the kitchen table, or struggling to find space in a small apartment that feels like a work environment.

Do a few small things to make the space feel motivating, such as putting your degrees on the wall, go for a morning walk, light a candle, put on some music. If there's anything that's motivational, that inspires you, create that space, if you can.

It's also important to keep things tidy, especially at the end of the day, so that you're not waking up to a messy office.

Make a daily routine

Create a sense of regularity to help orient yourself to her your working situation.

It involves simple things such as getting up at the same time every day, working out regularly, showering, brushing your hair — all things that can contribute to feeling like you have a routine to transition you from “home” to “work.”

Get dressed

One key part of the routine we recommend is getting dressed. No, you don't have to put on a blazer or walk around your house in your work shoes, but just changing out of your pyjamas sends a signal to yourself that it's time to be productive.

This is key for most people when first starting to work from home.

Dress comfortably and wear a nice top if you have any video calls.

Stay connected

Speaking of video calls, it's also important not to forget about your co-workers. It's important to check in on your colleagues, whether it's a text message or a Skype message, and try to have meetings over phone or video when possible.

It's hard to shift from being in an office environment, where you can walk down the hallway to talk to a colleague... to all of a sudden being in self-isolation.

It's also important to make time for your (virtual) social life. Whether it's a weekly happy hour over Skype or long phone calls with your closest friends, social connection has never been more important.

Make and keep boundaries

While it can be tempting to be connected to work all the time when your office is your home, setting boundaries is extra important so you don't burn yourself out.

That means not checking your email every minute, not allowing work calls after a certain time, and perhaps setting work aside entirely on the weekends.

Take care of yourself

Take time to exercise regularly or just to get fresh air. Don't feel guilty for taking a break. It's OK to do so.

That means taking a break from the news, too, especially when it's full of information that can cause anxiety. Stay informed, but it's OK to tune out sometimes.

Self-care is equally important. Keep up your exercise routine as long as possible, but if the pandemic lockdown becomes more severe, stand in the backyard and do jumping jacks if it comes to that.

Your routine has to include some element of self-care. You have to get your exercise and you need to eat healthily. Take care of yourself, be kind and stay in touch with colleagues and friends.