

Tips on working from home

Workplace

Your home working arrangements may not be as ergonomic as you're used to at work.

- Make up for this by varying your routine. Change your sitting position, get up more frequently, stretch and walk around.
- Give some thought to your workplace's design. Make sure that it's bright enough, and that it has as much natural light as possible.

Daily structure

Working from home gives you more opportunity to match your working hours to your own needs.

- Clarify with your team when you are expected to be working and reachable. Maybe there are children to consider if you need quiet for your work. These are issues to discuss with your team.
- Give yourself clearly-defined working hours. When do you start and when do you stop? Plan-in at least one "fresh-air break" in the course of the day: it will do you good and make things feel more normal.

Breaks

Taking breaks will raise your efficiency when you work at home, too, and give you a working rhythm.

- Spend your breaks away from the place you've been working at.
- Try to still use these breaks for some social interaction. Why not arrange a "virtual break" with the rest of the team? You could all hook up at once and spend 15 minutes talking about anything except work. Informal exchanges of this kind can be very unifying. But they won't just happen naturally when you're working from home!
- Snacking can be a big temptation when working from home. So be sure to keep to your regular meals. Keep yourself supplied with water at your new workstation, too.

The work/play boundary

If you like to keep your work and private life clearly separate, keep doing so: just "go mentally to the office" when you're working from home.

- Dress properly: don't, for instance, work in your pyjamas.
- Consciously start your working day, and do so the same way each day if possible.
- Actively end your working day – by clearing up your workplace, for instance, or noting down the next day's work tasks.
- Some people find that they get more easily distracted at home. So you may need to be more consistent in setting your priorities.

Exercise

Working from home involves a very short commute, and movement and exercise are easily neglected.

- Actively plan some exercise into your working day – at least what you'd get in your "normal" work routine.
- Maybe a member of your household will join you on a walk (though be sure to follow all the public health authorities' hygiene and conduct guidelines, too).

Mood and attitude

The current situation also challenges us emotionally and can affect the mood. Keeping a positive attitude here can work wonders.

- Remind yourself what benefits working from home can provide for you personally. You may find, for instance, that you have fewer interruptions. So use this time to do the work that requires high levels of concentration.
- Make conscious use of the "commuting time" you are saving.
- Find the time to read the humour section of the newspaper, too.

Contacts and interactions

Contacts and interactions are an important part of all our working days.

- Take advantage of all the (digital) opportunities that are available to keep in touch with your team.
- Keep cultivating your contacts at the informal level, too.
- Feedback and appreciation are always great motivators. So find ways and means to maintain your feedback culture.
- Keep your colleagues informed about what you're working on. This won't be as obvious to them as it usually is; and by keeping them informed, you'll raise your own commitment to the work.
- Our interpersonal communications also have a strong non-verbal component that simply gets lost when we use email or other text channels instead. So if your desired communication has any kind of emotional dimension, reach for the phone. And if you are having a virtual meeting of some kind, be sparing with your use of any irony or sarcasm: in such contexts, this can easily be misinterpreted or misunderstood.