

A GUIDE TO WORKING FROM HOME DURING COVID-19

The issue:

Many of us will now have settled into a routine of working from home. With the initial stresses of getting set up, finding an appropriate spot in your home, getting your systems plugged in and likely struggling with the wifi due to the overcrowding on the network, hopefully we are now all settling into working in this way.

At home, you have all the comforts you need, but perhaps you are also struggling with the added distractions- homeschooling children, perhaps you find it too easy to reach for the fridge, or maybe you are missing the interaction with colleagues, or find your makeshift office not an ideal working space.

Remote working can be a wonderful thing, but there are pitfalls for both employees and managers. Previously, an odd day here and there working at home might have seemed like a bit of a luxury, but our new realities of eating, breathing, working and sleeping at home with our nearest and dearest with no end in sight for the moment may seem a little daunting, and you may be worried about your career and reaching targets you have previously been set.

Here are a few tips for successfully working from home during Self Isolation:

Create a Routine

Start every day with a routine, get dressed, go for a walk, and make a list of your work priorities for the day.

Make Your Workstation Comfortable

You may not have the perfect office or work station at home. Many of us will be working in our kitchens, or around the children. You will need to plan ahead as you can't nip to the stationary cupboard, so make sure you order in what you need. Try and make sure you have a supportive chair and consider getting yourself a desk. Make sure you get up regularly for a good stretch.

Your Work Environment

If possible, try and work away from the main part of the house where other family members might be making noise and distracting you. Try and avoid working in your bedroom, as you will want to enjoy retiring there in the evening, and feeling you are not spending 24 hours in your bed. If possible, try and create a work setting with a nice view to help cheer you up.

Take Regular Exercise and Breaks

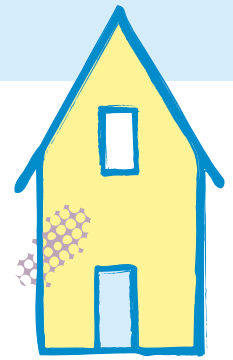
Get outside for a walk, or during your days work, stretch and go up and down the stairs. As your whole routine is off kilter, it is good to make new routines.

Minimise Distraction

Although it might be tempting to have the TV on- is it distracting you? Move your phone out of the way- switch off the news updates on your laptop if you can. The constant bombardment of the latest figures and bad news about the virus won't help you get on top of your workload, and is likely to increase your anxiety.

Stay Social

While working from home occasionally can be nice, it is definitely productive in terms of idea generation to talk to your team members and bounce ideas off each other. Or simply to have a chat during your break. Use Skype, Microsoft Teams, or Zoom to schedule in regular meetings, or create a group WhatsApp chat. When video conferencing think about how you



will look (not that it matters unless it matters to you but you may not want to be in your PJs!) and what the background is to your seat. Remember to apply your workplace dress code, at least to any parts of you that are visible!

Fresh Air

Try and get out once a day to enjoy the fresh air. You will find it clears your head and helps you escape the potentially chaotic household. A daily walk, jog or cycle will be great for keeping you healthy and not having too sedentary a lifestyle as you move from your workspace to the couch in the evening.

Food

Think about your food prep for the week. Perhaps you are finding it too easy to dive into the biscuit tin or the fridge? Prepare daily work meals in batches on a Sunday for the week ahead, and get in some healthy snacks to avoid bingeing on the unhealthy options. Drink plenty of water to stop you snacking too regularly. If you are gaining weight during the isolation period, it won't help you to feel any better about yourself.

Managers-Communicate with Your team

Life is messy for everyone just now, and while we all want to continue to be productive, perhaps there are additional stresses going on at home for many people. We are all in this together- so check in with your team that they are OK, and genuinely be interested in their answer.

Output

Think about whether you need to monitor and measure your output. For managers, think about if it will help to do the same. It is all too easy for people working from home to work later and with the added distractions of life, it perhaps isn't ideal to be working late into the evenings as you will risk becoming work down by the lack of work-life boundaries.

Weekends and Time Off

If you usually have your weekends off, just because your office is at home, doesn't mean you need to work everyday. Establish boundaries, it can be hard to switch off that laptop, or mute emails on your phone, but it can be important to do so if work emails are common. Equally, if you are home schooling or now have different commitments during the day and can be flexible with your time, perhaps you can focus your attention on family during the day and adapt your working hours to times when you can focus on your workload.

The coronavirus outbreak means that life is changing for all of us for a while. It may cause you to feel anxious, stressed, and worried. There are many resources to access online which can help if you are feeling worried about work and money while you have to stay home.

For Free resources to help employers and employees, visit the British Safety Council here www.britsafe.org/about-us/coronavirus-resource-database/

If you are feeling worried about your current situation and would like to access some help at home, visit our website for our Worry Box Book, available in ebook.

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Or visit our site at www.lttf.com/corona

