8 work from home tips to keep you healthy, happy and productive
Get dressed for the day

"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."
Albert Einstein

Whether or not you're expected in a Team meeting that day, getting yourself dressed for your job is an important psychological step towards preparing for a day of deep, productive work. You don't have to wear your heels or a suit jacket but having a shower or a shave and dressing in an outfit that would be appropriate enough if a friend dropped by unexpectedly helps to stave off the sluggish feeling that sleepwear often carries. It's all about maintaining some semblance of your previous office life, while keeping in step with what you'd usually do if you were heading in.

Develop rituals and have a disciplined way of managing the day. Schedule a start and end time. Have a rhythm. Take a shower, get dressed, even if it's not what you'd usually wear to work, then get started on the day's activities. If you're used to moving physically, make sure you build that into your day.
Keep Similar Hours

Certainly, a benefit of working from home is not having to commute and clock on at an exact time but in the interests of productivity, keeping the same or similar hours will help you structure your day and stay on task. This extends to breaks that you would naturally take during the day in the office; it's fine to stop working to hang out the washing, for example but try and keep those smaller breaks to under 15 minutes, as you probably would for a coffee or chat break amongst colleagues. Don’t skip that hour-long lunch break, either - this is a key component of diving back into the afternoon and ticking off tasks.

Create a Mini-Office

What makes your office feel like an office, apart from your colleagues? The fact that it’s styled for work to happen. You should aim to recreate a mini office of sorts, where there’s a desk, access to natural light and a comfortable, supportive chair at minimum and, where possible, a desktop screen, keyboard and ample space for notepads and other bits and pieces, just as there would be in your own workstation.

Other essentials you can decide on later: do you need noise-cancelling headphones? An at-home barista machine?

Whatever works hard at mimicking your working environment, you should implement at home.
Maintain the meetings

Just because we aren’t in the same room, doesn’t mean ways of working collaboratively, such as meetings and brainstorming sessions, should screech to a halt. Gone are the days of stilted, awkward and hard-to-set-up conference calls - virtual meetings through apps such as Teams have made collaborative remote working a breeze. Don’t be tempted to just retain a focus on work during such discussions as you usually would in the office.

Because you no longer have kitchen conversations and people might be just learning how to work from home, spend the first six to seven minutes of a meeting checking in on people. Don’t go straight to your agenda items. Instead, go around and ask everyone, ‘How are you guys doing?’ Start with whomever is the newest or lowest status person or the one who usually speaks the least. You should share as well, so that you’re modelling the behaviour. After that, you introduce the key things you want to talk about, and again model what you want to see, whether it’s connecting, asking questions, or even just using Teams or Yammer.
Embrace the benefits

Yes, productivity is important - but so is your mental health and wellbeing. Don’t deny yourself access to the perks of working from home, lean into them. You’ll be happier, healthier and more productive for embracing them. Turn up the non-distracting but mood-boosting music you like to listen to, take a 15-minute nap during your lunch break and use the time you would’ve spent commuting to meal prep for the evening and week ahead. Making the most of the experience is the best way to get excited about getting up and being at your workstation every day.

Incorporating exercise and breaks

Don’t think that because there’s no immediate reason to leave the house that you shouldn’t. Working from home provides both the perfect opportunity to exercise and engage with the outside world and the reason that you’re likely not to do so. To boost your own wellbeing, exercise and taking regular breaks that connect you with the world outside are crucial - and they don’t have to be long. Schedule a 15-minute yoga session on your balcony or in your backyard after your morning meeting, or pop a Headspace session into your diary during the traditional mid-afternoon slump. You’ll feel ions better for it.
Health: separating work life from home life

Just as there are likely to be rules - whether spoken or unspoken - about what’s appropriate in the office, so too should there be in your home office equivalent. Create rules for yourself that make work discernibly separate, not to hem you in but rather the opposite; to allow you to draw a firm line between your work and home lives. If you work from the couch in your pyjamas, for example, ending your work day and starting your evening won’t be sufficiently separate and you’ll likely continue to feel tied to work as a result. The more you can create a work ‘bubble’ within your home one, the more likely you are to feel the division of time when the work day ends.

Make non-work-related rules for yourself, too. Aim to go outdoors in the sunshine a certain number of times - if only to grab the mail, have a stretch or finish a cup to tea - and make a pact to have at least one conversation with a team member a day, even if it seems unnecessary. These littles top ups will keep you in touch with things outside your little cocoon.
How to relax after work

Although online working has already made the separation of work and home life difficult, working from home can make it even more so. The most important thing to remember is that you should respect the finish line, in the same way that you do when you leave your desk and depart your office every day. Don’t be tempted to let the working day bleed into your evening - make a pact with yourself to close that laptop, silence notifications and stop working at your allotted time, no matter where you are with tasks.

Cool Bananas!
#Restart
#Re-think
#Regenerate

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