

Tips for Working at home

As we move to working from home for the foreseeable future, it may be daunting to some people and it usually takes a while to adjust.

Here are some things you can do to try and adapt to the changes:

1. Run your usual routine

For some people, the prospect of staying in their pyjamas all day is the most tantalising aspect of working from home. But washing and getting dressed will not only improve your state of mind, it will psychologically prepare you to start work. Be ready to start your day at the same time as you would normally arrive at the office, and finish your day at the same time. Don't fall into the trap of getting up late and staying in your Pyjamas. Imagine your team are sat in the office waiting for you to start, just like normal. This means your morning routine may not change too much, you just cut out the travel time.

2. Choose a dedicated work space.

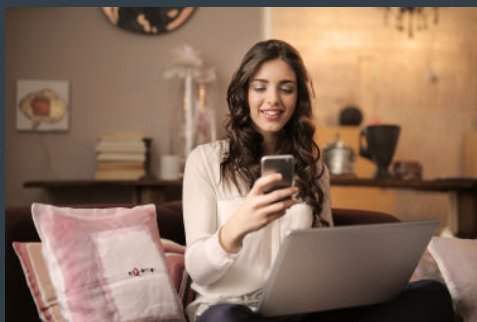
This will depend on the space you have available but ideally you want a clear space to use just for work, where you can sit in your work space, and walk away from it. Ideally not at the dining table where you have to eat or in front of the TV where others will be in and out. The NHS advice is that you should adjust your chair so you can use the keyboard with your wrists and forearms straight and level with the floor. At the end of a working day, it's best to switch off your computer and tidy away papers and other items. If there are other people in the house, finding a space where you're not likely to be disturbed is essential. Communicate expectations with anyone who will be home with you. If you are on the phone to a client or need to concentrate it can be infuriating if someone is hovering or watching television.

3. Take regular breaks

It's good to have a routine when you're working from home, but work shouldn't become monotonous and you shouldn't stay glued to your screen all day. It's important to take regular screen breaks and get up from your desk and move around just as you would in an office. Research has also found that short breaks throughout the day are more beneficial than less frequent, longer breaks. Working from home shouldn't mean you stay cooped up indoors all day. Even with self-isolation in place, getting out of the house is important. Go for a walk around the block or sit in the garden if you have one. Getting some sun on your face and leaving the space you work in are good for your body and mind.

4. Use technology to stay connected.

When you're at work, you're more likely to engage with colleagues but when you're working from home, you could go the whole day without speaking to anyone which can be isolating. Make some time to pick up the phone and have a real conversation, rather than just relying on email and instant messaging. Don't be afraid to ask for help if you are feeling alone, everyone is in the same boat and will understand the feeling.



5. Plan your day

The little known rule of productivity is that the busier you are, the more you will actually do. Plan out what you will be working on ahead of time - Don't wait to finish something then look to see what else there is. Have a plan of all the things you want to do and then go for it. If you start to relax, then less gets done and your productivity drops off. If you keep a list of tasks lined up you will be surprised how many things you can do in a day, even if a lot of them were not the ones on your original list.

6. Avoid Social Media



Make it harder for yourself to get distracted by social media by logging out of apps such as Facebook, Instagram and local news updates. Close them on your browser too. Do whatever you can to stop them creeping into your vision and distracting you.



7. Report IT issues

It can take a bit longer to resolve IT issues when you are at home so make sure you let your line manager know if you are having any issues.



8. Match your music to the task at hand

Research shows that listening to music can increase concentration but this completely depends on the individual and how you feel about background noise. Most people get into a good mental space when listening to music. Apparently, listening to video game sound tracks can help the mind focus – which is exactly why they are used in the games. It's a personal choice. Give it a go with a mix of music and see if something helps you get in the work zone.