

# Tips On Working From Home

## 1. Create a routine



**Make your bed!** This may seem like a simple thing, but making your living space ordered will give a sense of focus at the start of the day. This gives a feeling of achievement of a simple task, and sets an attitude of completing a task. Once you do one simple task it is easier to go on and do others. Click [here](#) to listen to an admiral talk about the benefits.



**Make a routine for yourself.** It can be all too easy to still be in your night things by lunch time, but you'll feel much more focused and purposeful if you still follow a clear morning routine, dressing comfortably but in something that is different to what you sleep in.

Think about how to structure your day:

- When will you want to take some breaks?
- When will you do any exercise?
- What will be your start and end time for working?
- When are you most productive in the day?
- What things can you include in your day that are for your own self-care and maintaining good mental health – meditation, yoga, fitness, time talking with friends, time outside in nature....
- Have a regular time to wake up and go to bed.



**Make a plan.** After breakfast take a few minutes to consider your key objectives for the day:

- Write these down and create a time line for your day. This can be based on the routine you have set for yourself, but with a focus now on the key tasks you wish to achieve today.
- Prioritise your objectives by writing a number next to them, so you can then see what you need to focus on first.
- When are you most productive and alert – in the morning or afternoon? Aim to do your key work at this time and use your less productive time for work that requires less focus.

## 2. Create a designated workspace and boundaries around work



**Make a designated area your workspace:** working from home means there is no clear boundary between office and home. If you have a spare room you can make this an office space. But if you need to work in your living space be sure to:

- Designate an area as your work space
- At the end of the day pack the lap top away
- If you're using your home computer, or have to work in the room you sleep in, clear away any work related items and shut down anything connected to work.



**Keep your bedroom for sleep and sex!** Working in your bedroom or on your bed will make it harder to relax when you do go to bed.

- If possible do not work in your bedroom.
- If you have to work where you sleep avoid working from your bed, as this will create associations in your mind between the bed and work, which may make it harder to sleep. This includes checking emails on your phone – do not check your phone until you are out of bed.



**Pick a definitive finishing time each day.** As part of planning your day decide when you will start and end, and when you will take breaks. This stops work time expanding into your evening and creates a structure to work within.

- At the set time bring your work to a close and clear your work place.
- If you are in a spare room you can leave and close the door.
- If you are working on your home computer in your room turn off all work related items.
- If working on a lap top on a table pack the lap top away.

### 3. Staying focused



**Stay focused on a single task:** a Harvard study showed that multitasking can lead to a 40% drop in productivity and a 10% drop in IQ (Bergman, 2010). Other research showed that when we think we are multi-tasking our brain is in fact rapidly switching between tasks and is less efficient (scientific America, 2009).

- Rather than trying to do many things at once, create a clear list of objectives, plan your day and work through each one until complete or you reach your cut off point for that task.
- Have clear times when you check emails, turning off notifications so you are not distracted by messages arriving.



**Create clear boundaries around social media.** It can be too easy when working from home to be pulled into the distraction of social media – it's designed to trigger the dopamine reward system in your brain that makes you want to keep going back for more and to stay engaged once you are on the platform.

- Create a clear plan for yourself. This might be to avoid it throughout the working day, or to have clear windows of time when you can engage, cutting off when that time limit expires.
- Turn off any notifications you have on your computer so you will not be drawn in.



**Share responsibilities:** over this time you may have children at home. As discussed earlier multi-tasking will diminish your productivity. If you have a partner and you are both trying to work and both being distracted you will be half as productive as you would be if you were just focused on one task. Rather than spending a day working at half capacity, take turns to child care for half of the day.

- If one of you is more productive in the afternoon and the other in the morning this will create a natural way to choose when to focus on work.
- If you share the same productive time you can take turns, swapping between who does the child care in the morning and afternoon.
- Alternatively work for a set period of an hour or two and then swap.

## 4. Taking breaks



**Make time for breaks!** Move away from your desk rather than being tempted into YouTube and let the break be a time to rest before returning to the focus of work:

- Take time to stop and enjoy the drink you are having.
- If you have a window looking out onto a garden, sky or trees take five minutes to stand or sit there so you can shift your focus outside of the room, or listen to some relaxing music.
- Standing and stretching or moving every half hour for a few minutes helps as the posture muscles switch off after 30 minutes of sitting. Working to a time deadline can make you more focused and productive rather than having it open ended.



**Enjoy nature:** research shows that spending a minimum of 120 minutes in nature each week reduces stress and cortisol levels in the body.

- This can be done in short amounts of time throughout the week or a couple of longer excursions.
- If you have a garden, see how you can take time to enjoy it each day, eating breakfast or lunch outside.
- If you live near a park and can walk there, spend a couple of afternoons going for a walk or take a shorter daily walk there.
- It can help as part of your morning routine to go for a walk as you plan your day.



**20 a day to keep the blues away.** Our sleep cycle and mental health is kept healthy by our circadian rhythm. When we do not receive enough sunlight in the morning the circadian rhythm starts to be disrupted and this can lead to problems falling asleep, low mood and depression.

- To keep your circadian rhythm healthy you need to be exposed to sun light for 20 minutes in the morning.
- If you are confined inside sit by a window and experience sunlight in the morning for 20 minutes if you can or go out for 20 minutes as part of your time in nature each morning.
- When there's no sun you can use a [SAD lamp](#) for 20 minutes, placed on your desk in the morning.

## 5. Self-care



**Connect with others.** After limiting your social media use during the day, decide how you want to connect with others in your free time.

- Choose a friend to telephone and over this time of increased isolation enjoy having time for a longer chat.
- Or use FaceTime or Skype so you can have a face to face chat.
- If using social media be aware that they may lead to a feelings of isolation rather than connection so see how to make them work for you.
- Apps such as [Houseparty](#) will allow you to add several friends to a group video chat enabling you to have a virtual 'party' or group chat.



**Connect with yourself.** In this time of enforced time at home with ourselves, explore how to make time for nurturing yourself.

- This might be making time for a regular meditation session each day
- Reading
- Listening to music
- Dancing
- Yoga
- Fitness
- Self-care – taking a bath, face mask, looking up new recipes, researching home workout programmes...

To explore what things you might do over this time, write a list of activities you used to enjoy doing as a child or teen, things that can be done inside or as part of your daily period of exercise outside. See if there are any things you used to enjoy but with life becoming more busy you have stopped doing. And then consider if this is something you might do now – listening to a whole album rather than having songs on in the background, picking up a hobby again, long chats with friends on the 'phone, reading, playing games.....



**Emotional first aid.** The following practices can all help maintain well-being and mental health. Use the links below or you can access them via the email.

**4-7-8 breathing:** this is useful for times of anxiety and stress and for preventing or minimising panic attacks. It takes about 4 minutes to do and can be done twice a day, AM and PM and then used when needed at times of stress.

[Click here to view](#)

**FOFBOC:** feet on floor, body on chair. This is a useful meditation to do as a punctuation point in your day or to ground yourself. It is also suitable for teenagers.

[Click here to view](#)

**Self-care practice:** this meditation helps when we are feeling overwhelmed by a difficult emotion. It offers a way to turn our attention to the difficult emotion as a sensation in the body and then hold it with kindness.

[Click here to view](#)

**Body scan and mindfulness meditation:** this 25 minute meditation leads you through the body, noting sensations and then rests attention onto your breath. You are then guided to rest attention on the breath, or turn with a kind attention to hold any sense of difficulty that is present.

[Click here to view](#)

**Loving Kindness:** this meditation explores bringing a kind wish to yourself and a friend, the wish that you be well, happy and free from harm.

[Click here to view](#)