

# An Employee's Guide to Working Remote during COVID-19

Well, here you are. Hopefully sitting in a quiet corner at home because you've either decided or been told to work remotely during the course of the Coronavirus outbreak. For some of you, this is nothing new, but for others, this is the first time you've had to work remotely for an extended period of time and you're nervous about how you are going to make this all work.



Here are a few tips and tricks to help you ease into this transition and keep your sanity while you work from home.

## 1. Create a routine for yourself.

Keeping up your daily routine helps to maintain a sense of normalcy and professionalism in an otherwise chaotic moment. For some people this might mean changing from your pajama pants into another pair of sweats to feel ready for the day, but for others, it might be helpful to pretend like you are going onto the office and go through your full morning routine.

While working, structure your day like you would in the office, making time for coffee breaks (video call your co-workers!) and taking time for a full lunch break. By keeping up with your routine, you can help prevent feelings of burn out and unproductivity.

## 2. Set up a dedicated workspace.

When working remotely, it can be difficult to maintain the boundaries between work and home life. Kids are home from school, Netflix is on, the dog needs to be walked, there are a plethora of things that pull us away from our job. One of the best of ways to help you maintain balance is to set up a dedicated workspace in a quiet area (if you can). Make sure you set expectations with your family that, when you are in this space, you are at work and make sure to enforce those boundaries whenever possible.

Another key thing to consider while setting up this space is what type of environment are you most productive in? For example, if you like a lot of natural light, then make sure you are situated close to a window. But most importantly, make sure the area is as comfortable as possible since you'll be spending a good deal of time there over the coming weeks.

## 3. Figure out your working style.

The key question to ask yourself here is, "When am I most productive?" For some of us, we love knocking things out early in the morning, for others, our sweet spot is between 2 and 4pm once we've had our afternoon coffee. While working remotely certainly places you in a different environment than working from an office, stick to your known productivity times to knock out key projects and tasks, and schedule your meetings around that block.

Make sure you clearly communicate your working hours with your manager and coworkers so that they know when to reach you and when you won't be available in order to help set boundaries for yourself and maintain a positive work-life balance.

## 4. Make a to-do list.

In order to keep yourself focused on your tasks at hand, experts recommend that you write a to-do list every evening of the things you want to get done the next day. That way, whenever you start work the next day, you have a clear sense of direction about what you want to accomplish.

## 5. Deal with distractions well.

Perhaps one of the best and worst parts about working from home is that you don't have anyone in your immediate area to keep you accountable for working during office hours. While we all need to take breaks from our work throughout the day, make it easier for yourself to resist the siren's song of the internet by downloading a browser app that helps you focus and block unwanted distractions. Here are a few popular, free suggestions to help you manage your time.

- **Mindful Browsing:** This free and open-source extension for Chrome gently flags your attention when you try to access sites that you know are timewasters and instead reminds you of how you'd rather spend your time. [Mindful Browsing Link Here](#)
- **Block Site:** Where Mindful Browsing gently alerts you the fact that you are distracting yourself, Block Site eliminates the possibility of distraction by blocking your access to certain websites between your designated working hours. The only downside is that this app can only be used through Chrome. [Block Site Link](#)

Other methods of creating dedicated focus time could revolve around household chores that need to be done. For instance, use the laundry buzzer or some other timer as a designated focus period and take a break when it goes off.

## 6. Communicate openly and often.

The key to being successful in any professional role is communication, but when it comes to remote work it is an even more important asset. Since you're no longer a few desks down from your coworkers or your manager, work with them to schedule 1:1 check-in meetings on a weekly basis to connect on your goals, upcoming projects and daily tasks.

## 7. Manage expectations (for yourself and others).

It's wise to have a discussion with your boss about what can actually be accomplished from home. Ask your manager what the priorities are and discuss how tasks will get done. This needs to be an ongoing conversation throughout your time working remotely, and in order to properly manage expectations, be honest about what is and isn't working or what can't get done in these circumstances. The key thing to remember is be kind to yourself and others if you or they fall short of initial expectations. You may feel like you're getting nothing done at first, but you'll eventually get the hang of things and find your bearings!

## 8. Stay connected.

If you are feeling lonely while working from home, you aren't alone! In fact, the Harvard Business Review reports loneliness as THE biggest struggle when working remote, so making sure that you proactively find some ways to connect and interact with your co-workers is key to keeping your sanity. One solution might be to use the Microsoft Teams video conferencing feature to set up a re-occurring coffee break or lunch date with a co-worker, or perhaps use skype to chat (in moderation) with your team throughout the day to keep the communication stream going. Get creative!

## 9. Take time for self-care.

This is far and away the most important piece of advice we can give you. We are currently living in a time of unprecedented stress and uncertainty for ourselves and our communities, so make sure to take time and care for yourself. One easy way to do this is to take a clear break from your work. Have that virtual coffee break with a co-worker, go for a walk and get some fresh air (all while practicing proper social distancing protocols!), watch a short tv show.

It's also important that we know when it's time to "log off" and enter home life again. As we mentioned before, it's important to set up these boundaries through setting clear expectations with your manager and your co-workers so that you can disengage from work and take care of all the other demands on your time.

Stay Safe and Well!

Outside of these tips, if you want to hone your work from home skills further, LinkedIn Learning offers free courses on “Remote Working: Setting Yourself and Your Teams up for Success.” [Link Here](#)

Sources:

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- [Chrome](#)
- [Forbes](#)
- [Hubspot](#)
- [Microsoft](#)
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- [Mindful Browsing](#)
- [NPR](#)
- [Ozy](#)
- [Remote Year](#)
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