



Founded 1125

## Top Tips on Working from Home

The number of us suddenly being faced with the prospect of working from home is unprecedented. Here are some top tips on what helps to keep focussed and objective driven despite all the potential distractions of home.

### Start Fresh

Make sure your working space is clear. There's nothing worse than waking up and realising you need to clear away the empty dishes or clear your work space of laundry before you can start.

### Get Dressed

You don't need to be smart, but do stick to your normal routine, whatever that is. Tempting though it may be to spend the day in PJs, it won't put you in the most productive frame of mind and will tempt you into lounging instead of signalling to your brain it's work time.

### Domestic Chores

Don't get side-tracked by these during the day. Do a few before you start work if you need, and even schedule something in for during your lunch break, but work is work and it takes a degree of self-discipline to keep fixed on this.

### Designated Workspace

Ideally a separate room, but more often the kitchen table, just try to avoid your bedroom if possible as this should remain a calm place for you to unwind and sleep. If you can find an out of the way space, that's ideal. Be clear with family members you can't be disturbed while you're working as won't help your focus to have them walking in and out making tea (or conversation). Similarly, it won't help to be looking at piles of unfolded washing, so try to pick somewhere that's free from clutter and mess. Even if you turn a chair around so you're looking out of a window in the corner of your dining room or have a folding table, these can prove helpful strategies for your focus.

### Be Super Organised

Block time out in your diary for your tasks and, if possible, only hold calls within certain hours of the day, to allow for you to complete your actual objectives. Depending on how you work best, you may find it better to complete complex tasks in the morning when your brain is fresh and more creative or communication-based activities in the afternoon - or vice versa.

### Create a List of Deliverables

What do you want to achieve and tick off by the end of the day? At the end of each day it's helpful to plan for the next, so you can sit straight down and get cracking. Consider an achievements and priorities-style team communication where you retrospectively look at what was accomplished in the previous week and what the current week's top tick-list jobs are. This will help you and the team to keep focussed on the main goals, rather than getting side-tracked by day to day issues.

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## **Regular Breaks and Healthy Lunches**

Schedule regular small breaks and/or a longer lunch break. If you're a fridge raider that's prone to constant snacking, try preparing food as if you were going to work. If you have a sandwich or a soup - prep it the night before and include any snacks you would normally have so that you don't just dip in and out of the fridge at will. Also step away from your work to eat lunch somewhere else in the house or garden or park. It'll refresh your brain and enable you to come back and have a productive afternoon. Don't forget a healthy lunch - whether at home or in the office - will also help with focus.

## **Team Management**

Take a day a week or a regular time of day to check in with each member so that you're keeping on top of what everyone's doing, that they're making progress and that everyone has the resources and support they need.

## **Be Virtually Social**

It can be lonely working from home, and if we're in lock down, it will be a difficult time for many to get through. Consider scheduling skype or other virtual meetings so you can see colleagues and catch up as well as having calls with friends - say perhaps over your lunch break or at the end of the day.

## **Limit Distractions**

TV off and brain set to work not home chores. The amount of emails tumbling into your inbox may be overwhelming, so sometimes you may want to turn off the wifi to get a piece of work done. The win really is being able to get stuck into project work without distractions.

## **Hours of Work**

Working from home is still working, so set your normal hours and stick to them. A caveat to this is if you want to capitalise on the lack of commute and start your day earlier. It may be that your work is happy for you to shift your hours, or take your 'lunch hour' at a different time that suits you - perhaps to help with a relative or child - but you would obviously need to check this with your line manager.

## **Switch Off**

Don't forget when your working day is done to close the door to your office or pack your things away - the day's work is done.

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