

Tips for Working at Home

1. Structure and boundaries:

- **Space:** Make sure you have set up a dedicated workspace. If you have a spare room, that's ideal. If not, you can set up at the kitchen island or dining room table, ideally next to the coffee machine. Arrange the equipment you need: laptop, chargers, phone, headphones, pen and paper, etc.
- **Time:** Get up at your regular time in the morning and follow your regular routine - take a shower, get dressed, and have breakfast. Do some exercise, yoga, or meditation if it is part of your routine. It may be tempting to work in your pajamas from your comfy couch or even your bed. However, you may find yourself feeling less motivated to work and more inclined to take a nap.
- **Continuum:** Instead of commuting to work, take a walk around the neighborhood to get your mind out of being-at-home mode and into work mode (while keeping social distance).

2. Social interaction is a very important part of a workplace. When the ability to interact is suddenly gone, your need for it is not. Fortunately, many video platforms are available—Zoom, Skype, WebEx, and Slack among others. “

3. Ask for help: In a typical workplace setting, when you are stuck on something, you can always check in with your coworkers to brainstorm about a solution. Working from home may create the feeling of having to solve every problem on your own. This increases the feelings of isolation and decreases efficiency. Use video or chat to ask your teammates for help when you need it. The ability to ask for help is crucial for your mental health as well as for your ability to do your job.

4. Flexibility: Take advantage of the flexibility that working from home offers - hrow in a load of laundry in between meetings, just take a mental health break when time allows.

5. Staying focused: Even in normal times it's not easy to stay focused on work for long periods of time. During the time of COVID-19, it is even more tempting to keep looking online or listening to the radio for the latest developments. Unfortunately, this is likely to increase anxiety. In order to stay informed without getting stuck, schedule a 15-minute news check for yourself twice a day—once in the morning and once in the evening.

6. Take breaks: Be sure to schedule those mental health breaks throughout the day to take a walk, meditate, breathe, or just move your muscles. Muscle immobility is one of the most common reasons for muscle aches we so frequently experience while working at the computer. These are even more likely to happen if you are working at a make-shift space that lacks an ergonomic setup. There are two kinds of movement breaks that will help: small movement and large movement. Small movement breaks do not require you to move away from your desk—just drop your hands from your keyboard to your lap, and move your upper body (roll your shoulders, gently roll your neck, twist at the waist to the right and left, stretch). Do this every 15 to 30 minutes. Large movement breaks require you to stand up and walk away from your desk. You might go for a brief walk or do some full body stretches. Take large movement breaks every 1.5 to 2 hours. This will keep your muscles feeling better and provide you with a bit more energy and ability to focus.

7. Wind down: Once your workday is over, give yourself permission to step away and actually be done. Take stock of what went well throughout the day and what you might want to do differently tomorrow. Spend time with your family, and have time to wind down and get some sleep.