Tips for working from home

1. Take care of your health

Working from home has lots of benefits and it also comes with some challenges. Its really important that your physical and emotional health and wellbeing is given priority.

Believe it or not, one way to work from home productively is to do some exercise as soon as you wake up and then dive into your to-do list. Simply getting a project *started* first thing in the morning can be the key to making progress on it gradually throughout the day, and the exercise is good for our physical and mental wellbeing.

2. Pretend like you are going into the office

The mental association you make between work and an office can make you more productive, and there's no reason that feeling should be lost when telecommuting.

When working from home, do all the things you'd do to prepare for an office role: Set your alarm, make (or go get) coffee, and wear nice clothes.

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3. Structure your day like you would in the office

When working from home, you're your own personal manager. Without things like an in-person meeting schedule to break up your day, you can be quick to lose focus or burn out.

To stay on schedule, segment what you'll do and *when* over the course of the day. If you have an online calendar, create personal events and reminders that tell you when to shift gears and start on new tasks.

4. Choose a dedicated workspace

Just because you're not working at an office doesn't mean you can't, well, have an office. Rather than cooping yourself up in your room or on the couch -- spaces that are associated with leisure time -- dedicate a specific room or surface in your home to work.

5. Commit to staying connected

Connection is key to your social and emotional wellbeing, and working remotely means we miss out on the day to day catch ups and conversation. Make use of technology to connect socially as well as for specific work purposes – a quick text, an emoji to express how you're feeling – if you'd like a call or facetime from someone for a connection chat just pick up the phone or send a 🌹 emoji. Be sure to dial in to the team zooms too!

6. Work when you're at your most productive

Nobody sprints through their work from morning to evening -- your motivation will naturally ebb and flow throughout the day. When you're working from home, however, it's all the more important to know when those ebbs and flows will take place and plan your schedule around it.

To capitalize on your most productive periods, save your harder tasks for when you know you'll be in the right headspace for them. Use slower points of the day to knock out the easier, logistical tasks that are also on your plate. These tasks "small acts of success" can help build your momentum for the heavier projects that are waiting for you later on.

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7. Plan out what you'll be working on ahead of time

Spending time figuring out what you'll do each day can take away from actually doing those things. Plan your weekly tasks each Friday afternoon so you're ready to go for the week. Then, try solidifying each daily schedule the day before, making it feel more official when you wake up the next day to get started on it.

It's important to let your agenda change though if you need it to.

8. Use laundry as a work timer!!

Doing your laundry is a built-in timer for your home. So, use the time to start and finish something from your to-do list before changing the load. Committing to one assignment during the wash cycle and another during the dry cycle can train you to work smarter on tasks that you might technically have all day to tinker with.

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9. Communicate expectations with anyone who will be home with you

Of course, you might be working from home but still have "company." Make sure any roommates, siblings, parents, spouses, and dogs (well, maybe not dogs) respect your space during work hours. Just because you're working from home doesn't mean you're home.

10. Take clear breaks

It can be so easy to get distracted as a telecommuter that you avoid breaks altogether. Don't let the guilt of working in the building you sleep in prevent you from taking five to relax. Rather than just opening YouTube and watching some comfort clips, however, use your breaks to get away from your desk. Go for a walk outside or spend time with others who might also be in the house.

11. Pick a definitive finishing time each day.

You might be under the impression that working from home establishes more work-life balance but be careful with that assumption. Working from home can also lead to you losing complete track of time.

In lieu of co-workers, whose packing up and leaving the office reminds you to do the same, set an alarm at the end of the day to indicate your normal work day is coming to an end. You don't have to stop at exactly that time, but knowing the work day is technically over can help you start the process of saving your work and calling it quits for the evening.

12. Embrace the Alone Time

When you are in your own space, you can do your own things. Want to work in your pyjamas? That's A-OK, though maybe not if you have conference calls set up!

The larger point is that you can set up and work in exactly the environment you want and that works for you. Things that would feel odd in an office environment, such as stretching exercises, can be performed with abandon when you're alone ☺