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A guide to working from home

With almost everyone now working from home in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19, here's a guide to help you work effectively, and stay healthy during your home working day.

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1 Setting up for success

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Find a new routine

Start every day the same way you'd start a regular office working day. Don't change your alarm time, sleep pattern or wake up routines. Get up, take a shower, get dressed, have breakfast and get ready for work the same way you would any other day. Don't just roll out of bed and login! You could use your commuting time to do some exercise or take the time for a healthy breakfast. Have a plan for the day and try to stick to it. Let others in the house know what your schedule is, so everyone knows what to expect. This might all sound obvious but having a routine really is helpful.

Make sure you log off in the evening at the same time you usually would. And on weekend put your laptop away.

Manage your time

Good time management is a must when working from home. Take short breaks to help clear your mind and factor in some time for exercise, fresh air and time away from your workspace.

It's easy for lines to blur when office and home are the same place, so make sure you keep a good balance, for example by having a work to-do list and a separate home to-do list.

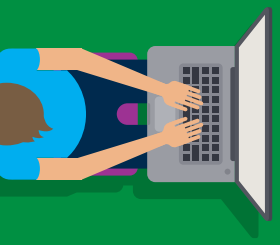
Create an effective workspace

If you can, choose a well-lit spot that allows you to be alone, concentrate fully and is free from clutter and distraction. We appreciate that in this current situation this may not always be possible, and you may need to negotiate the quiet spot with other people in your household.

Stay in touch

Keep talking to your colleagues as well other people around you. Not only is this important to stay in touch with the latest work developments, it helps reduce the risk of feeling isolated. Planning in virtual coffee breaks with colleagues is a great way to do this.

2 Your wellbeing



Looking after your posture

Stay healthy

Connect with your team

Manage your mental health

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Looking after your posture

You probably haven't got ergonomic chairs and a sit/stand desk at home! But you can still look after your back following these tips:

- Use the keyboard in a comfortable position (Your hands should hover over the keys. You should have a bend at your elbow).
- Make sure your wrist and forearm are supported and place your feet flat on the floor.
- Make sure your work surface allows you to arrange work equipment comfortably without having to stretch.
- Try and keep your workspace well ventilated and comfortably lit.

Stay healthy

- Setting a daily routine and sticking to it will help you to be as productive as possible, whilst also being able to look after yourself, both physically and mentally.
- Share your routine with family and colleagues, and support each other to stick to it – but remember we all need to remain flexible at this time.
- Keep moving and stretch regularly. There are lots of online exercise classes you can join in with.
- Eat well – avoid sugary snacks and drink plenty of water. Try to limit caffeine after midday.
- Remember to prioritise your sleep. Spend some time relaxing before bed, avoid technology, make sure any work equipment or papers are put away at the end of the day so you can switch off properly.

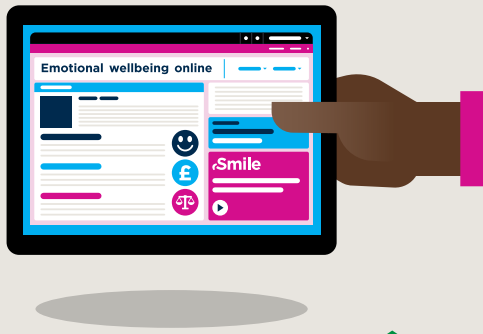
Connect with your team

- Look out for team members who may be feeling anxious, exhausted or overwhelmed. Remember the simple power in asking how people are.
- Practice good meeting etiquette; be present and pay attention, create and share a meeting agenda before the meeting starts, note down and share actions afterwards.
- Document more than you would normally. For example, create documents to outline your ideas or align on next steps. Sharing these documents will make sure everyone is on the same page.
- Communicate how you're feeling. It's easy when you're in the office for people to see you and notice that something is troubling you – take the time to talk to your colleagues.

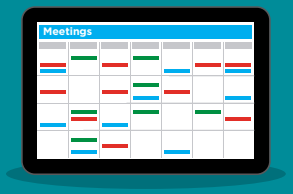
Manage your mental health

It's natural to feel concerned and we can all take sensible steps to stay mentally healthy.

Limit how much news you read and access. Try to only read the news at set times in the day rather than constantly.



3 Tips for managers



Schedule regular meetings

Make use of multiple communication tools

Have clear deliverables

Check in on a personal level

Keep an eye on your hours

Role model health and safety

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Home working means it's more important than ever for leaders to be connected to their teams and provide effective leadership. Here's a few tips to help keep you and your team in peak performance.

Schedule regular meetings

Having a few meetings at the same time at regular intervals helps maintain a routine. And having a good routine can help reduce stress.

Make use of multiple communication tools

Think about how your team can get hold of you if there's an urgent issue, or if they have a quick question. Consider setting up a WhatsApp group if you haven't done so already. Remember it's not an official business tool, so keep this light and don't share any confidential information.

Have clear deliverables

Clarity is key and helping your team understand their role and responsibilities will help keep everyone on track.

Check in on a personal level

Being in the office together means it's easier to tell if someone in your team isn't okay by non-verbal clues. These will still be apparent when you're on the phone, but you'll need to look a bit harder for them.

Build social cohesion at team meetings by all taking a minute in silence together at the start of the meeting. It helps people feel a sense of togetherness.

Keep an eye on your hours and role model the separation between work and home

Be mindful of how your own working pattern might be having a negative impact on your team. For example, you may have worked out a rota where you look after the kids in the morning, you swap with your partner, and then your working day starts and finishes later. Have the conversation with your team and make it clear that you are not expecting people to respond to your late-night emails.

Role model health and safety

We should avoid spending hours in front of a computer, and just like in the office, we should stop for lunch and take a tea break at home. People can often fear that by not being online all day, they could be perceived as not being productive. Show your team that it's important to take a break.

4 Videos to improve your remote working skills

Listen to expert advice to set you up for success

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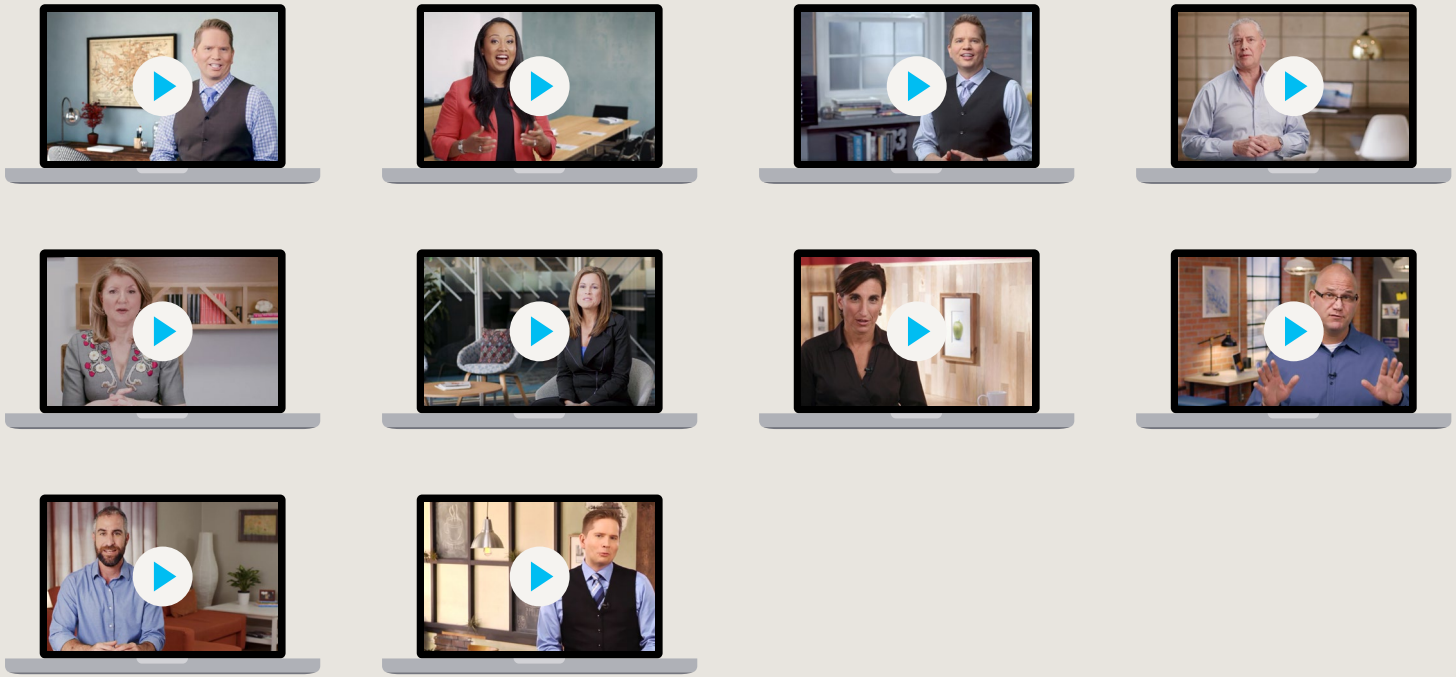

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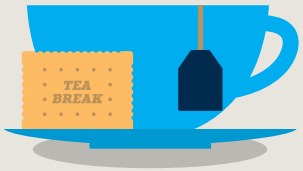
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