



Best Practices and Common Sense Tips for Working Remotely

Setting Up a Routine

- **Get up. Shower. Get out of your PJs**, avoid working from your bed. Start responding to your messages after you have breakfast. Following a schedule helps create a sense of normalcy and security that provides you with a baseline to build the rest of your day.
- **Set up working hours and breaks**, even if you tend to work with no breaks in the office. When working from home, the whole day can become work time. Strict work hours keep you productive, while you are working and allow you to enjoy life when you are not.
- **Build a fake commute**. Create a buffer between your home environment and your work environment. Whether this means going to get a coffee, going for a walk, or practicing a 10-minute meditation.
- **Lunch time isn't work time**. Leaving your 'at-home workspace' and entering into a different area of your home is important. During your lunch break, consider doing something that is not about work.
- **Exercise**. You are going to move a lot less. Make sure you are building a routine to stay active.
- Observe your **natural productivity peaks** and energy levels and find out when you are at your most productive. Communicate your best working pattern to your manager.
- **Over-communicate** on your availability, especially if you are working part-time, across time zones, or with international teams.
- **Switch off**. When you have completed your work schedule, turn of your computer and allow yourself periods of rest.

Setting Up Your Space

- **Space**. You should never feel closed-in or uncomfortable when getting work done. Ergonomics is important! Get a work setup that puts your body in a comfortable and sustainable work position.
- **Natural sunlight**. Daylight is needed to boost productivity and mood. It helps balance your body clock and leaves you feeling rested.
- **Distraction from other devices**. Avoid distraction through background TVs, social media, tablets, or home computers.
- **A door to close**. When getting things done or working on video calls, it is essential to stay focused. Closing the door behind you to limit background noise or distractions through pet animals can be helpful.

Keeping Up Your Productivity

- **Resist the urge to multitask.** The moment you begin multitasking, your ability to focus on the topic, conversation, or content being shared is immediately cut in half. So is your productivity.
- **Set up clear expectations.** Talk to your team and manager about their own/preferred WFH style. Questions you may ask:
 - What constitutes a timely email?
 - When to use other means of communications: calls, instant messages?
 - How to best satisfy co-workers' and client's needs?
 - What are the measures should performance issues arise?
- **Keep your environment as professional as possible.** Take business calls in a quiet environment, wear headphones, clear your place to avoid distraction and keep working with discretion, honoring company confidentiality.

Getting the Most Out of Communication Tools

- **Put extra planning and energy into conference calls.** When everyone is relying on conference calls for meetings, help them run as smoothly and productively as possible.
 - Check invites *when you get them* to **make sure there's a Skype link**. Don't wait til the call is about to start, when it can be challenging to track down someone to add a Skype link and you can end up wasting a lot of time until everyone joins.
 - **Be super vocal on calls.** If you're not vocal on a call, you will be forgotten. No one can see you nodding your head.
- **Consider meeting logistics ahead of time.** Everything is just a little trickier when you're not in the same room as the team.
 - Remember that things like taking notes, whiteboarding, deck sharing, passing the screen share around will be a little more cumbersome.
 - Anticipate any challenges and find a solution before the call rather than during. This especially applies to client meetings that we'd otherwise be having in person.
- **Use video calling if possible.** No one actually likes doing it, but it really does make meetings better when you can see the people you're talking to.
- **If you're leading a call, give it extra energy!** You should always be energetic, but WFH pros note that enthusiasm does not travel efficiently through phone lines. You will *always* seem a little lower energy over the phone than in person, so dial it up a bit. This applies to everyone on a call, but in general people in a meeting take cues from the leader. Give it a little more oomph.
- **Try to be as responsive as possible.** It's inevitable that people will find the fact that they can't walk over to your desk a bit more of a hassle, so make sure it's as easy as possible to get in touch with you through other means – IM, text, phone. Make sure the volume on your computer is up so you can hear notifications!

Managing WFH as Parents and Caregivers

- **Increased Communication.** It is critical to communicate with your manager so that they are aware and can work with you to manage challenges and changes to normal working routines while still meeting business objectives.
- **Managing conference calls.** Let your colleagues know if there might be little voices or interruptions during a call – they'll understand and may be in the same boat. Use the mute button to the extent possible.
- **Reschedule** if necessary. If unexpected interruption or urgent need means you have to miss a meeting where you are key, try to reschedule.
- **Explore schedule flexibility.** Talk with your manager and team about potentially staggering hours if you find you need to divvy up child care with your spouse or other family member so that you each have focused WFH time. You may end up working odd hours to get work done.
- **Explore alternate caregiver resources.** For example, leaning on a trusted neighbor or friend. If there are dependable high school/college kids in your network who may be at home while schools are closed, perhaps you can tap into them for some babysitting.
- **Find new online learning resources:** If your kids are at home too, you may need some new tools to keep their brains growing and their hands occupied. Seek out education resources such as those in [this reference](#) that are offering free subscriptions. Tap into resources for online learning and worksheets to keep your kids working too. One great resource for pre-k to 5th grade : <https://www.education.com/>
- **Plan breaks.** We all need breaks during a WFH day. If your kids are at home during these extenuating circumstances, then it's especially necessary – *and okay* – to take reasonable breaks throughout the day to tend to your kids, whether it's preparing a meal, taking a walk around the block, etc. If you do plan to do that, just let your team know and block out on their calendars as you would any personal appointment.
- **Stay informed.** Keep on top of resources and suggestions especially targeted to parents which are provided through our [Benefits](#) partners.