

WORKING FROM HOME

IN TIMES OF COVID-19

CREATE A WORK SPACE

Create a workspace that allows you to work both efficiently and distraction-free. When choosing a work area there are many things to take into consideration, such as placement of work area, potential for distraction and comfortability. If possible, place your desk near natural sunlight, perhaps by a window. Though not everyone's circumstance allows for a distraction-free environment, try to find a place that minimizes the risk of distractions.

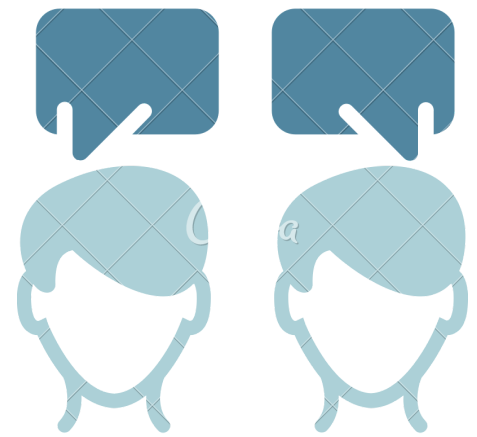


After choosing a space, make sure it feels like "yours." Put objects by your desk that will make it feel like yours, whether it be flowers, pictures, planners, pens/highlighters, etc. Making the place "yours" will help you feel comfortable and increase productivity.

Don't forget to ensure you have reliable internet connectivity!

SET BOUNDARIES

Set boundaries by communicating to your coworkers that you have a set availability. You do not have to work around the clock, just because you are home! Let your coworkers know that you will be available for work at your specific set hours.



It is also important to set boundaries with those who you live with. This may be very difficult to do if you have small children who constantly need attention, but physical boundaries need to be made in order to effectively work from home. If you are working from home with a partner, create a schedule that works for both of you where you take turns caring for your child(ren). If you are a single parent and your children are old enough, you may want to plan activities that do not require direct supervision. A conversation with your toddler/older child can help them understand why you are not showering them with your attention at all times. Creating clear physical boundaries with them may prevent them from barging in on a meeting.

If they are younger and require more supervision, sit them near you and give them a distraction or try to plan work meetings around their nap times. Most kids do better with visuals, so maybe try putting a red card on the door or a sign to signify when you can't be interrupted. Kids also love to feel involved, so try creating work for them to do with you and call it "work time."

If you are one of the many that are trying to balance work, homeschooling and/or childcare, it is important to communicate your situation to your employer/coworkers so they can help support you and make accommodations when possible. Nobody asked to work under these circumstances and employers know that.

If possible, turn off email alerts on your phone to create a separation from your work and personal life!

CREATE A ROUTINE

Creating a routine will help you get back some sense of normalcy. Starting off the day as you normally would, pretending you are going in to work and physically getting dressed helps to build motivation. Once you are ready to begin working, it is important to create a list of tasks that you need to accomplish for that day. While creating your to-do list, be sure to include breaks and lunches--keep yourself accountable! Research shows that high productivity has been linked to effective time management. Avoid multitasking, as it can cloud the mind and make it harder to focus on any one task.



Your list will guide your day and create space for productivity, self-care and growth.

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PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

People tend to neglect their self-care when working from home and that can be reflected in their work. Self-care starts with a well planned routine--it is important to include breaks, snacks, lunch and things you may need to do around the house. You've just woken up from a laying position to go into a sitting position, take a moment to stretch your limbs or even do some light yoga. Starting the day with a

healthy breakfast will set the tone for the rest of the work day. Eat something you enjoy while doing something you enjoy: watching TV, reading a book or sitting in silence.

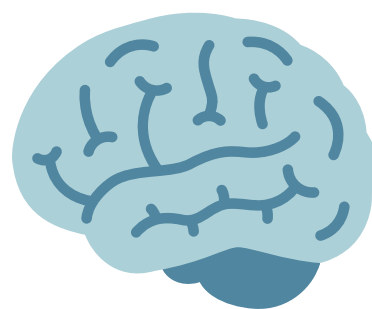
If you are working from home, this may mean you're sitting on a chair for hours on end, which means you need to take several breaks! Research has found that taking short, 5-15 minute breaks every hour or 30 minute breaks every 2 hours, can actually help productivity. Not only will you be less productive if you do not take necessary breaks, you will make more mistakes, make your eyes work overtime and your brain faces fatigue. During those breaks you may want to stretch some more, go for a quick walk, open up a window or just relax on the couch.

We know you are working hard and you may be in the zone, but don't skip lunch! You need to be eating at adequate times in order to power through the work day. As pressing as your work may seem, prioritize your physical well being and don't work while eating! Take your lunch break in it's entirety without doing anything work related. Along the same vein, make sure you are drinking **lots and lots** of water throughout the day! If you feel like you aren't drinking enough water because you forget, fill up a giant bottle of water and place it on your work desk to remind you to take sips here and there--your body will thank you!

If you are sick, be it the common cold, the flu or even just general exhaustion, do not hesitate to take a sick day! They are there for you to use them--don't feel "bad" or "guilty" for taking a sick day while working from home.

MAINTAINING MENTAL HEALTH

We all know working from home in times of a pandemic is no walk in the park. Which is why maintaining your mental health is crucial. When you wake up in the morning take a moment to yourself before going into a busy work day. Take some time to acclimate into the work day, give yourself the space to fully wake up and be present. Do things you enjoy like drinking coffee or tea while sitting on the couch or your favorite chair. Read a chapter of that book you started but never finished. Make your bed and declutter your office/work space. Now that you are ready for the work day, you can focus on the tasks at hand.



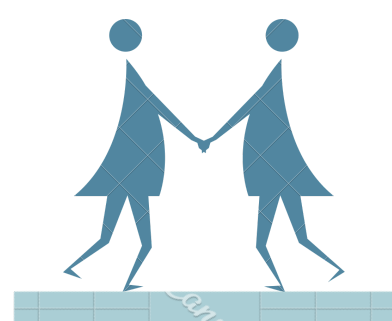
Those who are working from home are having a particularly hard time focusing on their work when the world around them seems to be falling apart. If you are one of these people, that's ok! Take a moment to acknowledge the impact of what is happening around you and how it directly affects you. In times like these, it is important to let go of things you cannot control and focus on the things you can control. You cannot control what is happening, how others are reacting and how things are being handled; you can control your social media intake, your own social distancing and your own self-care.

Working from home can sometimes feel more difficult than actually going into the office, and you may find yourself feeling overworked. Recognize your personal needs and act on them. If you feel like things are becoming too much, don't hesitate to take a personal or mental health day. Don't forget that mental health is just as important as physical health!

A lot of people are experiencing a sudden decrease in motivation while working from home. It is normal to have a hard time working from home, especially when the change was so drastic and sudden. Give yourself the time to get used to the new "normal" and don't forget that any amount of progress is good progress.

REACHING OUT TO OTHERS

In times of uncertainty and confusion, it is encouraged to ask for help if you need it--whether that be from your coworkers, family, friends or the Capital EAP staff! Connect with the people around you and you'll find there are others that feel just like you do.



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