



EMPLOYEE SERIES

Tips on how to effectively work from home during the Coronavirus outbreak

The Coronavirus outbreak has created uncertainty in our community and has impacted many facets of our daily functioning. Some employers are moving to remote/or working from home arrangements where possible to assist with social distancing. Some of the biggest challenges for employers include workers struggling with loneliness, managing their time, and communication among staff members. The following tips can assist employees making this transition.

-  **Create a comfortable dedicated workspace.** For those who are fortunate enough to have a guest room or spare room to convert to office space, pay attention to making this look professional (if you will be using video conferencing), comfortable and inviting. Even if you do not have this luxury, having a specific private work station is important, even if it is in the corner of a bedroom or living room.
-  **Get dressed. It is helpful to have a work mind set.** Even though the idea of working in PJ's may seem tantalising, it is beneficial to transition mentally for the day ahead and ensure you are prepared to still be seen if joining meetings by video. For the same reason, if you normally change clothes when you get home, continue with this as it will assist mental transitioning at the end of your work day.
-  **Establish boundaries.** If you're employed by a company, you'll probably have set hours of work, and it's important to stick to these when you're working from home. Be ready to start your day at the same time as you would normally arrive in your office or workplace, and finish your day at the same time. This will help with your work/life balance.
-  **Structure your day.** The principles of time management can provide a framework of support and has been proven to help with productivity. These include:
 - Start your day with a clear focus.
 - Have a dynamic task list.
 - Focus on high-value activities, and attend to these when you are at your best.
 - Minimise interruptions, particularly if you have other family members at home.
 - Limit multi-tasking. Switch off phones, and email if you have an urgent/important task.
 - Review your day and your to-do list.
 - At the end of the week, review your accomplishments during the week and write this up in an appropriate format for your work, in order to be an ongoing record for yourself and your employer.

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-  **Take regular breaks.** It is good to have a routine when working from home, and it does not need to be monotonous. It is important to have regular breaks and move around, as you would in an office. Research has shown that short breaks throughout the day are more beneficial than less frequent, longer breaks.
-  **Get moving.** Any physical activity is worth it. Exercise can improve mood and help to prevent mental health issues. If you are not in self-isolation getting outside in the sunshine is also extremely beneficial.
-  **Stay connected.** Keep in contact with work colleagues via phone, video chat, or WhatsApp for work groups as much as is practicable, especially if you have come from a socially active work community. Face-time is more effective than email alone, and helps to keep you from feeling isolated
-  **Practice self-care.** Be kind to yourself. Do things that bring you enjoyment and comfort, such as listening to relaxing music, a warm bath or meditation once your working day is done.
-  **Reach out. Discuss with your Manager any concerns you may have in making this transition.** Access Wellbeing Services are also available for those who would like to access further support during this time. These services will be offered via video conferencing or telephone to respect prioritising the health of our community members and adhering to social distancing protocols.

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