

# **Body/Mind Thriving at Home**

## **Working from home tips—ways you can make working (and studying) at your residence a success:**

Working at home may be what you do, or completely new to you as it is for millions of us now thanks to the COVID-19 and the need to stay safe and stop the spread of this virus. Whatever category you fall into you may need a refresher on how to work from home or learn from the beginning. Yes, working from home has a large number of positives but there are also a lot of new challenges you will need to face, and being prepared and ready will help you master your work at home life.

### **1. Stick to a routine.**

It's easy to think that when you are working from home you don't need a schedule, but without one you are setting yourself up for failure. Don't think that if you work from home you won't need to set up a schedule or routine. This keeps you on track but will also minimize the changes from a traditional work environment to your home space. You need a plan, not so stringent that you can't be flexible but you need to have your work life routine set up so you transition to working at home easily and don't waste time.

### **2. Get dressed.**

Sounds silly but is so important. You have to get yourself physically and mentally ready to work from home. Get dressed, you may not have to be business formal, you can casually up your work but you need to make sure that you get up in the morning, have your normal get ready for work routine and get dressed. When you stay in your PJ's your mind will follow and getting into your work mindset will be harder.

### **3. If you had a commute, use it wisely now.**

Using your morning commute for other purposes can actually be a big positive now. Instead of your in car time you can use it for anything else. A great way to use it is for some me time. Nothing will help you set up your day like have a few minutes to get your mind and body ready to work. This commute time is also a great time to get a short exercise in, meditation or even getting the kitchen sink cleaned up fast. Anything that will get you into the work mindset.

### **4. Create your communication plan with work and co-workers.**

Take time to set up how you will be communicating with others at work. Will you use phone, text, emails, or online chat . This way from the start everyone can agree on a preferred method of communication, and you won't have to have a million different programs running at once. I have found that personally email is the best way to communicate basic information, but chat is even better. Next create your emergency communication. If something needs an answer or reply like this minute how can you communicate? I like to let those that I work with if something this urgent comes up skip the inbox and send me a text right away.

### **5. Separate work and life.**

This can be a struggle, not everyone has the ability to have a work space at home, unless they already work from home. But this is so important. When you work from home you will always have creep, what we full time work from homers (wfh) call when work life or home life creep into other areas. This is where the work from home challenges can really begin. When you have your home life creep into you work you will get less and less done. When your work life creeps into your home life you will work constantly and never let it go. Set up a work space, anywhere, that is only work space. You have to separate the two, work and home, in order to have harmony. So create a work space either a room, a cubby or anything to help you separate. When you are in your work space you are working, when you leave it leave it all behind and have a home life.

## **6. Take more breaks.**

This is important and thanks to the COVID-19 anyone who works from home will need to make changes to their breaks. Instead of taking a break to run errands, get lunch with friends, or grab some social interaction you will need to take breaks that keep you healthy. So instead of going out just get into nature. Nothing is better for the soul than time in nature. If you have kids at home get everyone out for a bike ride, hike, some sports fun or just a walk. Your doggies will need to get out more often too! Get outside, have a mental break for work and help boost everyone's immunity with some outdoor activities. It is also a great time to take breaks to get those house chores done, everyone feels better with a tick of the to do list and an advantage of working at home is when you need a break you can get more house work done. Taking breaks helps keep you sane!

## **7. Set a work schedule.**

This may really apply more for freelancers, but you may need to think about this as a newbie working from home. Make sure you have your routine ready and that everyone you work with knows what hours you will be working from home. It is easy to cross the boundaries of a happy work life balance when you work from home. So start off on the right foot and set your work hours and stick to them. You need a general daily routine but you also need times that are set aside for work only. This keeps you on track and can make working from home easier.

## **8. Stay healthy.**

This is more important now than ever. But when you work from home it can be easy to grab the easiest snack as opposed to the healthiest snack. It is even easier to simply forget a lunch break, or water break, so you may have to work harder at this. Make sure you are taking care of yourself. With COVID-19 spreading and everyone spending time at home to be safe, take time to focus on strengthening your immune system, and your families. Make sure you and everyone in your home are eating your fruits and vegetables and getting all the water you need. Get your daily exercise and doing that outside is a great option. Cut back on your stress, get everyone in your house doing things to keep stress levels down and everyone sane while you are cooped up. Make sure everyone is getting good sleep, when you are all spending all their time at home you may find you have energy to burn at the end of the day. So make sure you burn it off and everyone keeps sleeping well. Take a daily vitamin, a great way to make sure your body's immunity is getting everything it needs to stay healthy.

## **9. Work harder to stay social.**

If you are new to working at home, going from your normal co-worker interaction to none is jarring. Add the COVID-19 on top of that and take social interaction from the equation and you will realize just how hard you have to work at it now. So what can you do? Chat, make sure you have a chat system for everyone from work, not only can you stay connected but you can get help real time. You can use Google Hangouts, Skype, Slack, and a million other platforms for free, so do it! When you are self isolating and working at home you have to work extra hard to stay in touch, for work and with friends. Just know that while you may have to take extra steps to stay connected just make sure you do it and you won't feel so lonely. You can also find an online community of other work at home moms or dads to stay connected and remind you that you are not alone.

## **10. Set boundaries**

Just like you need to set work times with those you work with you need to set boundaries with your family. If you have kids this is even more important than if it's just you and your spouse. Your family will need to know that when you are in your work space to keep those distractions to a minimum. It is easy to be distracted at work, but when you work from home you will have even more distractions and to help minimize these, have a talk with your whole family and set up some guidelines. Things will pop up that you have to deal with but if you set up times that you need to be able to work with no distractions is a good foot to start on. Letting your kids know when times you are working and when you are not will set those boundaries keeping everyone feeling better.

## **11. Use a planner or pen and paper**

Making sure you keep your work schedule and tasks outlined either on a planner or a digital planner will help keep you productive and on task. Keep your work tasks outlined and organized, stay on track and don't multitask. Working from home can already be distracting enough, so don't divide your attention any more and do one thing at time. Keeping work and life separate on paper can help you visualize your new normal.

## **12. Self motivation --the key to work at home success.**

Working at home is great. No communtue, no costs for food, comfortability of working from home but when you remove the traditional work environment you may find your motivation to work dwindle. Making sure you keep yourself sane and motivated to work is the only way you will work. You won't have anyone around you like you may have had in your office keeping you on track, it's all up to you now. You have to keep yourself motivated to work and stay productive, but you can! Don't worry with all the amazing digital tools out there you can have fun while working at home.

[I have lists and lists of productivity tools, project managements, to do lists, password protectors, websites for research and so on if you want any. Like using Asana, Trello, Canva, Wordpress, Tick Tick, Google Add on's etc]

## **13. Troubleshoot on your own. You are your own IT department now.**

You may have not even thought about this, but if anything goes wrong with your computer at home you may have to fend for yourself. While you may still have access to an IT team you may have slower response or may not be able to have someone come over and help you. So you may want to make sure you are comfortable with handling issues all by yourself. Most times if you Google what kind of problems you are having you can find a solution, so you won't be alone, just keep in mind that you will need to stretch your problem solving muscle in a whole new way now. So being prepared to take on some common issues is a great way to arm yourself before an issue arises. For starters, make sure your internet is working well, and that when you are working no one else is using it, you don't want dial up speeds so prioritize your internet needs. Make sure if you are using a work computer or your own computer that you keep it up to date, nothing is worse than waking up on a [Monday morning](#), starting your computer and having hours of updates. Even if you have auto updates set up just check to make sure you are up to date to avoid issues. Make sure for any phone calls or meetings that you have a good webcam and headset ready to go. Don't just rely on your built in microphone, you want to hear everyone clearly and that backgroundnoise doesn't distract you. If anything comes up along your work at home journey, have a go to a person you can call for help, or that you are able to try to troubleshoot yourself.

#### **14. Leave work at work.**

After work take a break and get into your home mode. Just like when you leave the office you leave your work there, learn or find new ways to do this while you work from home. Use your commute home as time to separate from work, take a breather, get a short walk in, anything to help you switch gears. You can also take time to find a new hobby to help you stay sane and relaxed. You can still order supplies online, or may have what you need around that house. Try something new like drawing, coloring, writing, reading, quilting, crocheting, baking, sewing, organizing, crosswords, learning a new language, learn a new skills, take a free online class, anything new to keep your brain working.

*Author —Kristin Nethken*

*Received from Pioneer Memorial Church, Berrien Springs, MI*