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# Working from home tips for beginners

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Working from home (WFH) is going to be new for many employees. To help you get started with your WFH journey we've compiled the top tips from the experts – and include a few secrets no one tells you!



## THE BASICS

### 1. Separate work and living spaces

It's vital to have separate work and living spaces. No space? Not a problem. Having a particular desk set up for work in the corner of a room is better than nothing.

As long as you only work at that desk, it'll become second nature to leave it at that desk when you're done.



### 2. Set regular work times and try to maintain your work/life balance

Working too much can lead to burnout and wrecks your productivity. Appropriate boundaries and set working hours are needed to maintain the work/life balance an office usually brings. This lets you truly relax in your spare time and gives a deadline to help keep you focused during the day.



### 3. Take regular breaks to come back with a fresh head

Taking breaks feels a little odd with remote work, as you can technically stop at any time. Get to know what works for you, as there needs to be a balance between staying focused and not working yourself into a rut.

Getting away from your screen will also help to prevent headaches.



### 4. Stretch to avoid cramps and pains

An injury may affect your ability to work. Avoid this by taking the time to stretch your muscles regularly (especially if you're sat typing all day).

During your regular breaks, spend a few minutes stretching your limbs and muscles to ease out any tension.



### 5. Avoid despair by managing "impostor syndrome"

Impostor syndrome can wipe out motivation without warning. The isolation that remote work can bring may make it difficult to rationalise your success, leaving you feeling like a fraud. This is incredibly demotivating, and can easily lead to procrastination. The best way to deal with this is with common sense and communication.

- Keep a folder of work you're proud of or positive feedback you've received.
- Listen to constructive criticism, but dismiss random, useless, negative comments.

Most of all, know that if you feel like a fraud then you're doing something right. You have to be successful to feel like you don't deserve that success, and if the feeling endures then it only means you're standing the test of time.

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# 5 things no one tells you about working from home

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## 1. Some people don't believe you're actually working

Sure, it doesn't matter what other people think. But you're human and we all are susceptible to the 'judging eyes' of our colleagues, friends and family who think WFH is synonymous with "catching up on TV." It wears on you after a while. People will assume "flexible" schedule means you don't really work that much.

- Begin to refer to your home office as "the office" you can reduce this effect.
- Changing your language to reflect traditional work speak helps people take you seriously. For example, if you have a Zoom call, you tell the person who just interrupted you that you are "walking into a meeting" and will have to call them later.



## 2. The majority of household chores may fall on you

It starts with little things, like the technician who's supposed to stop by between 1-5PM. It's not a huge imposition, you're already home. So, of course, you'll be the point person on that task. Before you know it, you're the point person for everything - finishing up what's left of the dishes, being available for package deliveries, and (worst of all) being the babysitter when your child is sick. The majority of us don't even realise this lopsided division of labour happening until it's too late.

Do not be afraid to say no. "I cannot be available for the plumber," even if you can. Set the boundaries upfront that this is your workday. You cannot also do grocery shopping, laundry, or dishes.



## 3. Kids will walk in when you're on video calls

When you work from home, you get to be in control of your time and your diet. You can sleep later because your office is right in the next room. You're more productive because you aren't wasting an hour in the morning putting on makeup, choosing an outfit, and making your lunch. Working from home lets you be more in control of your time and diet in a way an office can't. Your health and quality of life can improve significantly as a result.



## 4. Your health improves!

This could be a huge point of contention and the consequences of it depend on your team.

Some customers or team members may find it off-putting and unprofessional. Others will think your business isn't serious, deeming you unable to take on their important (non-child-interrupting) work.

Hopefully, no one really cares. Everyone is working from home and interruptions are par for the course. We all take calls in sweatpants, outside, without makeup, and (of course) with kids in the background.



## 5. Cabin fever is real, and can be overcome

Even if you're one of the lucky few who enjoys long stretches of uninterrupted time alone (guilty), you're still susceptible to cabin fever.....or loneliness. It's that moment when you realise you haven't been outside or seen a human other than your immediate family in days. Emotional isolation isn't fun – or funny!

It's hard to find people who get what it's like to work from home and understand the emotional rollercoaster you go through on a given day (and no, your spouse doesn't count). It can leave you feeling really alone and stuck in your head.

- The key to surviving this one is making a point to get out of the house at least once a day
- Bonus points if you shower and put on real clothes.
- The next key is finding people like you.
- This takes time – however having a tribe who understand what it's like to work for yourself buffers against the deleterious effects of isolation, leaving you free to get back to work.