Working From Home Because of COVID-19? Here Are 9 Tips to Help You Be Productive

Companies have been making their employees work from home in order to protect their clients, their workforce, and all their families. In this article, we examine the best WFH tips for you.

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Like you, I never thought that I would be working from home until further notice, or, even worse, witnessing a global pandemic. These were just things I read about and learned in my public health classes, like John Snow – no, not the character from Game of Thrones – the founder of epidemiology who traced the source of the cholera outbreak, and many other trailblazers in the field like him. But as I sat cooped up in the comfy premises of my apartment, I started to wonder, what are the best tips for working from home for a productive workday? Some may have worked from home here or there, maybe every Friday, but with the current COVID-19 pandemic, many companies have been making their employees work from home in order to protect their clients, their workforce, and all their families. So, I searched the internet and asked my colleagues at Viventium to gather the best WFH tips for you.

Don't Forget the Basics

Designate a Working Space

The same way you might have a cubicle, office, or workstation at work, you should set a designated workspace at home where you can get your work done. Try to avoid working from your bed or couch, places that are usually associated with relaxing and leisure time. Leave those places for later, once you're done with work.

"Protect" Your Space

Remember that video of the BBC dad, professor Robert Kelly, doing an interview? Well, we are all Robert Kelly now. Working from home, especially if you have kids, family, or roommates, can be challenging and distracting. Let's be honest, the boundary between work and home can become blurred. Relax your expectations and be ready for interruptions. To deal with this, set some expectations and boundaries, and communicate these rules to those around you so that you can better concentrate. This way, you will be able to prevent many intrusions or distractions that can set you behind on your projects and goals. Have kids? The same rules apply. Will they follow them? Probably not. *"We used to talk about work/life balance and then work/life blend – now it feels more like work/life fusion. In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, we are learning how to do two jobs at the exact*

same time. Set good expectations of what each day looks like both with your kids and your boss!" - Terra Vicario, Chief Marketing Officer

Set a Schedule or Routine

Keep your old morning routine or create a modified or new one. Woohoo, the commute is over, and at first, it might be nice to get those extra hours of sleep. It's even nicer to just roll out of bed and get to work. However, as nice as this can be, it's essential for your welfare and productivity to set a set schedule or implement a routine. That can be setting an alarm, brushing your teeth, taking a shower, having breakfast, and getting dressed – and no, that doesn't mean that you have to put on a suit and tie. Yes, it might be nice to work in your PJs, but after a long period of time, it's not healthy for your well-being. *"Create a routine rather than just sitting down and starting to work. Act as if you are going to the office. Workout, take a shower, get your morning coffee, etc. Similar to what you would do as if you were traveling to the office. The same holds true for the end of the workday."* - PJ Tunder, Senior Product Manager If you have kids, set a schedule with them and your partner. Try to replicate a schedule that's similar to their school's. If you have young ones, you may need to find some new and exciting activities outside of their regular ones to keep them entertained. Make use of all the free resources available, from the Kennedy Center Education Artist-in-Residence at Home program – where your kids can doodle during lunch with an artist in residence – to free Broadway shows from the comfort of your home.

Set Goals

Set realistic goals on your projects, and try to tackle them as you go. Realistic goals will help you cope better if you do end up falling short. In order to set great goals, a good strategy is making them SMART. SMART goals – an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely – will not only give you control of what you need to get done but will also provide you with a benchmark to determine if your goals and objectives are reasonable and being met. Start by setting goals that are well-defined and particular. Making your goals specific will help you focus and get the most out of your efforts.

Take Care of Yourself

Personal Well-Being

Working from home after a while can feel isolating, especially now, where it's recommended to stay inside as much as possible. This can impact your physical and mental well-being. Try to eat healthy and keep active. It can be tempting to just lay on the couch all day binge-watching Netflix, eating comfort food, and opening the fridge every 5 minutes for another snack, but exercise and a healthy diet is essential, especially in the current health crisis. *"Calories are counted different when working*

from home. For example: a doughnut and a celery have the same caloric content during WFH. Tldr: I'm getting fat." - Zishe Glauber, VP of Product Management and Compliance

Set Up and Stick to Business Hours

It can be easy to check an email or two after work. Or continue to work on that project after hours when you're on a roll. But in the same way that you set up a designated workspace and set boundaries, it's important for you to stick to regular business hours. Not only will this allow you to decompress and relax after work, but you'll also be more productive and get better work done. Additionally, this will help the transition and give you a bit of normalcy.

Take Regular Breaks

Take a moment to schedule regular breaks. Just because you're working from home doesn't mean you're not allowed to take a lunch break. Regular breaks are important for your well-being. Move around, set time for lunch, make some coffee – just make sure you take a break. *"Remember to take breaks from sitting at your desk. Get up and walk around at least once every two hours. Better yet, go for a walk outside for a few minutes.*" - Dan Neuburger, CEO

Don't Forget to Be Social

Check in With Your Coworkers and Team

Just like you, your coworkers and team might be experiencing the same feelings. Perhaps it's their first time working from home. Check in on them! At this time, face to face and personal contact is important to keep everyone in the loop and to see how everyone is doing or if they need assistance. Share more with your colleagues; these are tough times and sometimes it's nice to take a break from the current headlines and isolating feeling working from home. You can share photos, memes, videos, or nice updates! *"Stay connected! Whether it's asking everyone to use webcam or FaceTiming with your colleagues, it feels good to collaborate, socialize, and maintain a personalized touch.*" - Alexandra Alberti, VP of Sales

Team Bonding Activities

Just because you are working from home and practicing physical distancing doesn't mean you can't have the after work happy hour or team bonding activities you normally do. Get creative and have a happy hour over Zoom. Or maybe setup a game night, workout, or other fun activity, all virtually of course – the options are endless. Working from home can be tough, especially if you have kids. Having something to talk about and do with people that are going through the same thing can be comforting and great for your well-being.

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