

HOW TO WORK FROM HOME AMIDST COVID-19



Procrastinating?

It has been a week working from home due to Covid-19 and let me tell you, as someone used to office work, trying to find my feet and focus has been highly stressful.

My desk is a kitchen counter, the constant cleaning of which makes for good procrastination. My cafeteria is an emergency -stocked fridge and the routine raiding, definitely makes for a better procrastination.

Here are a few tips that will help you tackle working from home, successfully.

1. Drop the pyjamas, and get dressed.

Get dressed! It might seem like a simple tip, but it's a crucial one.



The only difference with going to work and working from home should essentially be, the commuting. So, prepare and dress for work as you usually would. The simple act of changing clothes and getting ready for work serves as a mental and physical signal that it's time to wake up and get things done. Pyjamas and “stay at home” clothes may give you a sluggish and laid back feeling, which may not lead to productivity.



Depending on your work from home arrangements with your company, getting dressed also applies to appearance-based tasks. Get up, take a shower, put that wig on, and even put on makeup if that's what you'd usually do. You don't need to go as all out as you would for the office if you don't want to, but waking up and taking care of your appearance can go a long way toward helping you feel like you're taking care of yourself too. Not forgetting that you could possibly have a lot of video meetings and the last thing your colleagues want to see you in, is your jamies and unbrushed hair.

2. Ditch the couch, and designate a work space



Keeping your work and home lives separate can be quite the challenge, if you don't know the balance between the two.

The separation between the office at work and home is physical, and you want to try to recreate that as much as possible with a designated physical workspace at home. Creating a workspace will help you mentally prepare for a day at the “office” and prepare you to get down to work, and then transition to switch off once you leave the workspace and hit the couch as a way of “knocking off” like you usually would.

You may be worried about space in your home or apartment and how you can't really spare a room for a workspace, but it doesn't necessarily *have* to be a room. Your workspace could be a corner, a section of your kitchen counter, or even your coffee table.

Make your new designated workspace comfortable with a chair you can sit on and with a solid platform that you can write on or place your laptop on.

3. Know your work hours and stick to them

If it was 9am to 5pm at the office, then it's 9am to 5pm at home. You need to make working from home work, and that's done by sticking to your working hours.

This means holding yourself accountable and knowing that potentially your coworkers could be depending on you, and that if you slack, you disrupt the entire work flow. Avoid this by putting in your best efforts into the work you produce throughout your working hours, but also recognizing when enough is enough. If you took 2 hour lunch breaks at work, still take them at home. Work hard, but don't burn out.



4. Mize the distractions

If it's not your neighbours loudly mowing their lawn, or the TV with its alarming "Breaking News" updates that leave you a little anxious; the distractions that you don't usually experience at work can be challenging. It's human to get distracted. But you need to be wary of how *much* you let yourself get distracted.

Right now, one of the biggest distractions is the news. If you're working remotely because of the novel coronavirus, checking in on COVID-19 updates is going to keep it at the top of your mind. It's good to stay informed, of course, but it's also easy to scroll yourself into an anxious mess.

If you're someone who's susceptible to getting distracted every time you get a news alert, turn your notifications off during the workday. The news will still be there after 5PM.

5. Communication is major key

The key to handling working remotely like a boss and steering through any hiccups is communication—most especially with your manager and colleagues. Lay out a plan with your coworkers on how often you will communicate and check in during the day, and alert your manager or coworkers of your day-to-day tasks so that you and your coworkers will be able to be held accountable.

It is also crucial to select and agree on a medium that you and your coworkers will communicate on, either Slack, Microsoft Teams, Skype, Emails or even WhatsApp where all team members will be present to receive comms.

