

Top 10 effective strategies for working from home

Working from home has now become the norm for many people however after a while the sometimes monotonous experience can cause us to fall into some bad habits that affect our overall wellbeing. If you find yourself struggling from time to time or just need to refresh your working from home routine a little bit, there are some key things that you can do to ensure your productivity levels, focus & mental health don't take a hit. Here are our top 10 tips for the most effective strategies when working from home:

1 Have a dedicated workspace

If you can, keep your workspace separate to your living area. This will allow you to finish work and mentally switch off at the end of your day. It also helps to keep the areas that are usually associated with leisure time, like your lounge room, as the relaxing spaces that they should be.

If you don't have an office or dedicated work space, make sure that you pack everything up at the end of the day so that you can go back into 'home mode' when you want to.

2 Routine

Keeping the same routine is the best way to stay on track. When you were going into the office you probably followed the same routine every morning to get ready for your day - Turn on your computer, go get a coffee, say hi to colleagues, set up your desk, review your diary and get started.

It's important to create a similar routine at home to help you get into work mode for the day. It's also recommended that you continue to wake up at the same time you always have, or within 20 minutes of it, as this is what your body clock is used to. This also gives you the option of using the additional time that would have been spent travelling into the office to create a new morning routine that starts with some self-care or exercise before you start your day.

3 Schedule your day

To stay on schedule, segment what you'll do and when you'll do it, over the course of the day. Create personal events and reminders in your calendar that tell you when to shift gears and start on new tasks. Multitasking has proven to be an ineffective strategy so concentrate all your focus on one thing at a time to be as productive as possible.

4 Communicate your expectations

During this time, it's quite possible that you're not the only one who is now working from home. It's important to communicate your expectations to anyone else in the house so that others will respect your space during your work hours. Just because you're at home, doesn't mean 'you're home'.

5 Reduce distractions

Studies have shown that when you get distracted it can take a full 20 minutes to regain your full concentration so try to remove as many distractions as you can. Turn your phone off or put it onto

aeroplane mode, turn off notifications for social media, and close the tabs on your computer for anything that you don't need for the specific task you're focusing on.

Ever struggled to focus at work because the music is too loud? The best thing about working from home is that you're in control. *Can't focus with music on – turn it off. Like to listen to the opera for optimum concentration? Go for it! It's up to you.*

6 Work to your own productivity schedule

Start to take note of when you're the most productive during the day and schedule your tasks around these times. If it takes a little while for your brain to switch on in the morning, schedule time to check emails or other tasks that require less concentration first thing in the morning. If you know that you're most productive mid-morning, schedule your most difficult tasks then, and ensure that others are aware.

If your partner is also working from home, let them know that you need to be uninterrupted during this time. If you have kids, set them a task or activity that will keep them busy for the time that you need or perhaps schedule that time as their screen time.

7 Use technology to stay connected

Just because you're on your own, doesn't mean you have to be lonely. If you notice that you start to feel a bit low or isolated, schedule some catch up time with your team to chat through your day or specific project instead of only doing it via email. A simple 15-minute chat with someone can lift your spirits and is great for your overall mental health during this time. Schedule a regular catch up each day or a few times a week to maintain communication and help you to stay positive and motivated.

8 Take clear breaks

Try to avoid working in front of a screen all day without getting up to stretch. Just because you don't need to leave the house to get to your office doesn't mean you shouldn't leave the house. Set yourself clear breaks throughout the day and leave your desk to get some fresh air. Moving your body and getting some exercise, even if it's just a short walk, will help you maintain your concentration levels for longer periods of time for the rest of the day. If you're at home with someone else, this is also a good chance to catch up and chat so that when you get back into your work there are less distractions.

9 Plan your day the night before

Before you finish for the day write out all the things that you need to do the following day. Doing this while you're still in work mode means that you won't forget anything, and it will get you off to a great start in the morning when your brain is still waking up.

10 Have a set finish time

Although it's a common belief that working from home will give you a better work/life balance, be careful not to fall into the trap of always having your work open and easy to glance at, even when you've officially finished work. Doing this can lead to burn-out so be sure to turn off your computer, close the office door if you can or pack up your work area, and stop checking emails once your day is done so you can mentally switch off.

Keep your work and home areas as separate as you can so that you still have the feeling of relaxation when work is done and you 'return home' for the day.

Assemble

assemblecommunities.com