

How to Productively Work From Home During the Coronavirus



What a week it's been. For many, the order to work from home can be a big bonus, and others dread the thought. Even those that enjoy working from home a day or two a week can eventually start to feel a bit isolated.

Having gone through the change from working in an office of over 400, to working remotely out of a home office, I know the transition can be difficult for many. At first it can seem new and fun, but then you realize you have a hard time focusing on what needs to be done because, well, you're home! Home is where you relax and try to get your mind off of work. Here are some suggestions to help bring a little structure to your workday when working from home:

- Try to set up a designated work room or area, even if it's just the other end of the dining room table from where you would normally sit. You want a zone that is your work focus zone. When you are in that zone, you are there to work. And to the best of your ability, have family members understand that when you are in that space, you are "at work" and need to minimize distractions and interruptions as much as possible.
- For some (me included in the beginning) I had to stay with my normal morning routine and exercise, shower, eat breakfast and "dress for work". It is very tempting to work on your favorite sweatpants and tee shirt, but for a lot of people that keeps them in the "I'm at home" state of mind and work gets harder to focus on.

Put on the clothes you would normally wear to work. This, and having your work zone in the house, will help you mentally feel like you're at work.

- Structure your day to simulate what you would be doing if you were at the office. Do you have normal times of the day where you check your emails, or dedicate to a project? Keep that same schedule and structure when working from home.

You may also start to miss the interaction and social aspect of working with coworkers. You are probably already set up to join in on the virtual meetings, and that is an important part of staying connected to your team as well. But you may still feel a bit isolated from other coworkers you normally talk to during the day. Stay in touch with them. Send them an email or, even better, talk with them on the phone. There's a high likelihood they are feeling the same way. Don't be afraid to reach out. You'll both be glad you did.

This is a very unique and unsettling time and has many people feeling very anxious. Don't fight it, it's normal to feel that way. But also remember, this is a temporary thing and things will turn back to normal soon. We are taking extraordinary measures now to limit the impact of this virus. And once that is achieved things will turn quickly back to where they were before. Who knows, maybe your family will be a better understanding of what it is you do when you go to the office.

Take care of yourselves and each other (family, friends, and coworkers). The next few weeks will be an adjustment. But focusing on what you need to do for work so you're ready when things get back to normal will also help you keep perspective on the bigger picture and hopefully keep you too busy to dwell on the doom and gloom that is on all of the news updates. Stay informed, be safe and smart in your actions, but don't dwell on all of the negativity.