

Work from home: tips for staying healthy, happy, and productive

For many of us, working remotely from home for an extended period is uncharted territory and comes with its own unique set of challenges and a learning curve. Even for those who have been working from home for years, it's not as easy and fun as one might think. There are mental hurdles to overcome, including the feeling of isolation. Yes, the idea of rolling out of bed and going to work in your pajamas sounds like a dream come true. But in reality, it is more challenging than one can imagine. We have compiled a list of tips to help your transition.

Daily routine

How and when you start each workday is a crucial piece of the puzzle to ensuring you're productive and comfortable when working from home. It's important to treat each workday like a day in the office, but there's more to it than that.

1. Organize your days with recurring tasks.
2. Get dressed in the morning as though you are going to an actual office. Working in your bathrobe for "just an hour or two" is a slippery slope.
3. Schedule breaks.
4. Having different work spots for different parts of the day, for specific tasks or based on your mood.
5. Create a healthy routine that involves a proper breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Equipment and work environment

Using the right equipment, be it a chair, desk, keyboard or monitor, can help have a big impact on how your back feels at the end of the day. And, as you'll quickly see, working at the kitchen table is a big no-no.

6. When possible, having a dedicated office space with a door that can be closed is essential.
7. Set boundaries. Be it kids, your partner, or your roommate. Just because you work from home doesn't mean you're always available to run errands, watch a sick kid, or wait for the electrician.
8. Think outside the box if you have a baby or a puppy to take care of. Adjust your work environment so you are comfortable and can focus, while still being able to take care of a sick kid, or yourself.
9. Continually optimize and re-think your work environment.

Apps and services

There is a long list of applications available to you from Northwestern. Coordinate with your manager to confirm what applications will be used to perform your work or communicate with your team.

10. [BlueJeans](#), the video conferencing service, and [Microsoft Teams](#) are great tools to keep in touch with your team remotely. Consistently using these tools will ensure you get up and get dressed each day.
11. Use apps like OneNote to manage your workload, organize ideas and just keep on top of things.
12. Set schedules to check email and other communications resources. Turn off all the unnecessary notifications on your phone to avoid interruptions.

13. Use apps in full-screen mode as much as possible to limit distractions.

Mental health and physical health

Maintaining your mental and physical health is the most important aspect of working from home. You miss out on the impromptu encounters and conversations, which, at first glance, feel superficial, but after you've been working in your home office for a few weeks (or even a few days!), you'll be longing for any human interaction.

14. Getting out of the home/office during the workday is essential for sanity.
15. Go out for a walk but make sure to keep the appropriate distance from other people
16. Build time in your schedule to exercise and read the book you have been waiting to do.
17. Again, set boundaries. One of the biggest challenges, especially for those with a family, is family members thinking that working from home means you are always available for a phone call or errand. Communicate your schedule, and if needed, create "do not disturb hours."
18. Work outside if you can. It's astonishing how a little fresh air can improve the mind's functioning.
19. Get creative and experiment to build your perfect workplace.
20. For five to 10 minutes every hour: Get up, move around and take your eyes off the screen.
21. Eat healthily! Don't only rely on microwave meals and delivery orders.

As a reminder, you can use the service of the [Employee Assistance Program](#) which offers free counseling and resources to employees on a variety of topics.

For additional tips on the best ways to work from home for your physical and mental wellbeing, check out this article by [Sky News](#).

Please reach out to the appropriate teams should you have any questions or concerns. The contact information for NU-Q operation units can be found [here](#).