

Looking after yourself while working from home!

Created on: 17/03/2020

Keep Safe

While you are working from home, your ergonomic set up is just as important as any other day.

While working from the couch, or even from bed (imagine!), sounds super tempting it isn't going to feel that comfortable after a while. Even though you may not have the same equipment available to you at home as you do at work, there are some simple steps you can take to make sure you are comfortable, productive and safely set up whilst you are working remotely.

Try to:

Use your home furniture to your advantage

Dining tables make great makeshift workstations, and your kitchen bench can be used to give you some short periods of standing. Just make sure you don't spend too much time standing if you are going to be looking down at your computer as neck issues could become an issue - use some books to elevate your laptop and stick to 15 minutes of working when standing up.

Break up your day

While you are working remotely where you have a formal ergonomic set up, it will be helpful to take the opportunity to move as often as you can and more regularly than you would usually. Taking a break from sitting every 15-20 minutes can help keep you feeling good and productive and can be as simple as getting up to grab another glass of water or stand to make a phone call.



Stay Connected

Connection is one of our key human needs. Staying connected helps us to build and maintain relationships that positively impact our happiness and productivity. Remaining connected with your team whilst working from home, gives you an opportunity to better support each other.

Tips to stay connected:



Use Microsoft Teams, Skype, FaceTime or email to stay in touch with the team

Establish some 'new norms' with your team, including how often will you touch base and the most preferred method (e.g., videoconference or teleconference)



Pick up the phone and check in on your colleagues, ask how their day is going and whether they need any support, kindly recognise the support they provide you

Take the opportunity to maintain any routines your team or colleagues may have, such as sharing a weekly morning tea, and adjust them to be virtual.



Be Healthy!

A healthy body is one of the best preventative measures against illness. Remember to keep up regular exercise, a balanced diet, drink plenty of water and make sure you're getting enough sleep; while it may be tempting to embark on the latest Netflix binge session, make sure you are aiming for about 8 hours per night. Practice regular hygiene including regular handwashing, wiping down of surfaces including phone, laptop, mouse and keyboard, to minimise germ transfer.

If you are unwell, don't work regardless of whether you are already at home or not. Take the time to rest and recover so you can return to life at full speed again sooner!

If you find sleeping is difficult for you, where possible, implement a sleep routine (waking up and going to sleep at the same time each day and practicing the same wind-down routine).

Eat a balanced diet with healthy, unrefined snacks and drink plenty of water throughout the day.

If you do become unwell, contact your GP for treatment advice.

Aim to exercise each day, even if it's a quick workout and stretches in your backyard or in your living room.



Stay Active

Working from home can often mean that our usual commute and ability to get in some steps is non-existent. Don't let that stop you from getting some activity in.



Get creative!

If you live in an apartment building or a two-storey home (or more), the stairs can be a great place to get some incline walks in, but make sure you go slowly, to avoid tumbles. Stretching, yoga and ab workouts are all great ways to stay active, even in your own home. YouTube some guidance videos to help you out.

Set Boundaries

When we are working from home, our work/home boundaries can get very blurred and it is even more likely that we may work outside of our usual work hours, especially if we are feeling quite bored and isolated at this time.

In almost all circumstances, it is not an expectation, nor an obligation, to work outside of your agreed hours and it is truly not encouraged for a variety of reasons. Consistently working longer hours could lead to burnout, reduced productivity over time, reduced quality of work, and is associated with higher levels of turnover in organisations.

In these extenuating circumstances, set up some good practices to help you switch on and off from work. Some ways you can do this are:

- Set clear hours for yourself, set up do not disturb on your work phone, have different clothes for work and non-work hours and keep a designated work area.
- Outside of work time, get some other things done! Read a book, watch some Netflix, tidy your cupboards, fold your clothes or call a friend.
- Try anything to distract you from the long list of work tasks that can wait until tomorrow and work your designated hours only wherever possible.

Get Support

Working remotely can be difficult especially if you're not used to it, as it requires a lot of focus, independence and a change to our daily routines. It can be particularly challenging if you thrive on social interaction.

Don't be afraid to say you're finding it hard, asking for help early when we feel unsure or worried about something helps us to access support and develop solutions quicker.

Tips to access support:

- Reach out to your manager if you are finding remote working challenging
- Maintain open, regular communication with your manager and team about what you need to maintain productivity and feel supported.
- Look to utilise technology to maintain social connections, such as group chat, skype or social media.