

STAYING PRODUCTIVE WHILE WORKING FROM HOME

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented number of people working from home in order to prioritize employees' health and safety. Working from home can bring several benefits such as a sense of freedom, working independently, the ability to manage your own schedule, flexibility, and the absence of a commute. However, challenges also come with it such as feeling isolated, difficulty building relationships with colleagues and managers, and inadequate work space and equipment.

If you're just starting out on your remote work journey, remember that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions for each person, but here are some tips to help you successfully navigate the challenges of working remotely.

SET UP A QUIET, PRODUCTIVE WORKSPACE AND CREATE STRUCTURE

Arrange a designated clutter-free area with a proper desk and chair. Make sure you have a strong internet connection, a computer (ask your employer if they will provide the needed equipment or if you have to supply your own) and a phone. Ensure you have antivirus software installed (e.g., Malwarebytes). Also it's really nice to have a good pair of headphones, particularly one with an attached mic for conference calls. Check for appropriate lighting and background. Create a productive work environment at home by structuring your day and avoiding distractions. Have a plan; schedule out your day.

COLLABORATE WITH CO-WORKERS

Don't just email your co-workers, but use instant messenger and video conferencing tools for your remote meetings. Since you will not have actual face time with humans, these tools will allow you to hold meetings and get that real-time human interaction. In addition, learn how to use screen share and the chat

features. Screen sharing allows others to see what's on your computer screen. (See box at the bottom for examples of these tools). These tools are ways for you to feel more connected with your co-workers. Once you get a feel for how they use these tools, you will be able to communicate just like you're in the same room.

SET YOUR PROFESSIONAL GOALS

What would you like to achieve or accomplish at work? Write this out. Speak to your supervisor and ask what milestones and skills you'll need. For example, you will need to be able to work independently, have great research skills to help you solve problems you don't have the answers to and also be able to troubleshoot IT issues that might arise with your home computer. In addition, schedule frequent check-ins with your supervisor; track and share your accomplishments.

TOOLS FOR WORKING REMOTELY

VIDEO CONFERENCING/CHAT TOOLS

- BlueJeans
- Skype
- Google Hangouts
- join.me
- GoToMeeting
- Webex
- Slack (chat tool)
- Zoom

FILE STORAGE AND SHARING

- Google Drive
- Box
- Microsoft Teams
- Dropbox

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Basecamp
- Trello