

Working from Home

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Working from home can be quite different from working in an office or factory setting. There are a number of benefits to working from home, such as the lack of time spent commuting, more personal time & flexibility in being able to help other family members during the day, and having the ability to take a phone call outside on nice days.

But there are some challenges to working from home that need to be considered. When working from home (full-time or part-time), you will have to be disciplined in order to stay focused and not be distracted by other activities at home. It helps to communicate with the people you live with, how you are going to live together and enable space/time for working remotely. Having that conversation can help you, and those who live with you, set expectations.

Try to maintain a normal work hours schedule; it can be easy to keep working extra hours if you don't monitor your time. Take short breaks occasionally during the day, to help you stay focused, particularly during any two-way communications. Eat meals at regular times and don't forget to exercise and get plenty of sleep.

Set up an ergonomic work space at home that is convenient to use on a regular basis, and can be made quiet for both independent work, and for group internet call-ins. Communicate to family members when you are working and when they need to minimize their interruptions (particularly during conference calls).

There will probably be extensive communication: by phone calls, texting, and instant messaging. You may be doing multiple group meetings using the Internet (Zoom, or Teams, or GoToMeeting, or WebEx, etc.), including some meetings showing your image on camera. Try not to schedule back-to-back Internet meetings, but allow at least a 10 minute break between meetings.

You may need to adjust your work hours in order to communicate with other team members. Some Internet meetings will require adapting to others' time zones (3 hours difference on the east coast). You will have to be very organized when maintaining a schedule of planned meetings with other team members, including scheduled staff meetings.

Take care to communicate your intended emotion/tone in e-mails and written communication. Carefully choose your words and re-read your text before sending it, so you are faithfully communicating what you are intending to say. Keep your tone friendly but informative.

You will need to keep organized files on your laptop computer, so you can easily bring up important files when working on several different projects with multiple teams.

You will need to utilize security features to ensure the safety of company information, including care when sending information to others. You may be issued a secure, company furnished, laptop computer that must be protected at all times from theft; and only used for company business.

Working from home is easier for some people than others. Introverts usually like working remotely; but Extroverts can sometimes struggle. If you are struggling from a lack of connection, consider calling a co-worker on a regular basis. Just having conversations regularly helps stay connected, and having pets nearby can be very comforting as well.

Consider setting up re-occurring check-in meetings with your boss/supervisor (daily, weekly, or bi-weekly depending on the role), to ensure they are aware of all the things you are working on, as well as to have scheduled times to get their guidance/advice.

Occasional off-hours “happy hour” Internet meetings with co-workers and friends can be very helpful, since these can help replace the after-hours live “happy hours” that you may have done previously with co-workers and friends.