



## Essential Tips for Working Remotely

The workplace is no longer just in the office; it's where you are. It's important to have a place that will set you up for success. For those new to remote working, here are four essential elements on how to make it work.

### 1. Ergonomics setup

How you set up your workspace has a big impact on reducing awkward postures and the risk of injury. For those who are finding themselves working remotely more often, here are some ergonomics tips to follow:



- **Create a dedicated workspace** | Identify a space or room with a desk or table dedicated to computer use. Do not work while sitting on a bed or couch for long periods of time.
- **Monitor** | Use a separate monitor, keyboard, and mouse. If you are using a laptop, place it on a stand or a stack of books. If you use dual monitors, they should be of equal height. The monitor you use the most should be in front of you. Make sure the screen is the right distance away. Extend your arms to check, the screen should be just past your fingertips.
- **Keyboard and mouse** | Use a traditional desktop setup. Hook the laptop directly to monitor or place the laptop on a stand and use an external keyboard and mouse. Reduce eye strain by looking 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds every 20 minutes.
- **Chair** | If you can invest in one thing, make it a good chair. It should be adjustable for seat height, tilt, back height, and lumbar support. It doesn't have to be expensive. Use a chair with low back support and a seated cushion. For a kitchen or dining chair, insert a seat cushion and roll up a soft towel or blanket to place in your low back area. Set your seat height to make sure your elbows bend to 90-100 degrees.
- **Phone** | Use the speakerphone or microphone/voice activation for cell phone texting. Don't brace the handset or cell phone between the neck and shoulder.



## 2. Set a balance

Work-life balance is very important. Your personal life is just as important as your professional life. Here are some balance tips to follow:

- **Maintain consistent working hours** | It is easy to lose track of time when working remotely. Set consistent hours to avoid overworking.
- **Set a morning and evening routine** | Setting a routine will help you manage a proper sleep schedule. It is important to get at least 7 hours of sleep per night. Additionally, it will help you to wake up, be alert, and ready for the workday!
- **Take scheduled breaks** | Scheduled breaks can increase motivation and boost energy levels.
- **Prepare a to-do list/planner** | Creating a to-do list will allow you to track your progress. Make sure to prioritize your list with the most urgent and important tasks to get done first!
- **Exercise regularly** | Exercising will help to increase your performance at work. Moving your body increases blood flow to the brain. This can sharpen your mind and keep you alert. It is recommended that you get at least 10,000 steps a day.

## 3. Stay connected

It can be difficult to connect with coworkers in a virtual setting. Here are some communication tips to follow:



- **Communicate proactively and often** | Over communicate! It is better to have things said twice than to be lost.
- **Ask a manager for their communication preferences** | This will help you communicate and get a response in a timely fashion. Some managers may look at one form of communication more frequently.
- **Use video when possible** | Video allows for body language to be seen and tone of voice to be heard. This promotes more efficient and authentic communication.
- **Keep up casual communication habits** | It is important to make time to connect with coworkers. Try dialing into a meeting a couple of minutes early to catch up on life outside of work. These types of conversations may help you function better with teammates and coworkers.

## 4. Recognize distractions

Working remotely can create more distractions than in an office environment. Preparing for these distractions can combat the frustration that your day isn't going as planned. Here are some communication tips to follow:



- **People** | One easy way to manage interruptions from people is to ensure that they know your schedule. Have you communicated clearly with them about your schedule? If they still seem to miss out, then you can stick your schedule on the door of your remote office. If you do not have a remote office space, you can keep the schedule in a place where you know everyone will see it. This will ensure that people know you will be busy at a particular time.
- **Chores** | Completing chores around the house when you telecommute may seem like no harm, but the time commitment that chore detract you from getting your work done. The idea of, "I'll just do this one thing quickly" frequently turns into a succession of chores that can eat away at your workday. To avoid this happening to you, set up a schedule to accomplish them later in the day or week. Creating a schedule as if they were a work-related task will help you remain cognitive of your chores and avoid a backlog of chores.
- **Pet Distractions** | Creating a walk or playtime schedule will allow your pets the exercise and attention they need to help them stay calm before sitting down to work. Giving them a chew toy or bone will also aid in keeping them busy so you can get back to your work.