

I have worked 100 percent remotely for more than a year. We all face unique challenges, not only because we have different personalities, but also due to our varying lifestyles.

Some suggestions ...

### **1. Say 'Good Morning'**

When you log on each morning email the group. No! ... this is not big brother monitoring you, checking if you are working ... the system does that for me 😊. You are all dedicated but I would like to know you are well, online, available and it will help us to remember the community we are and that there is support from the team.

### **2. Maintain Regular Hours**

Try to set a schedule, and stick to it... most of the time. Having clear guidelines for when to work and when to call it a day helps maintain work-life balance.

### **3. Create a Routine**

Deciding you'll sit down at your desk and start work at a certain time is one thing. Creating a routine that guides you into the chair is another.

What in your morning routine indicates you're about to start work? It might be making a cup of coffee. A routine can be more influential than a clock at helping you get started each day.

Structure your day – Outlook has a calendar facility which may help. This will also help you watch the clock – it is surprising where the time goes when there is little going on around you.

### **4. Dress for work**

What suits you ... but I prefer to avoid PJ's ... if I dress for the day, it gets me in the right mindset ... and also ensures I answer a WhatsApp video call without hesitation (and scaring the caller).

I try to keep a regular routine; shower and dress every day as if I were going to an actual office. It makes the home office more like a real office and tells / reminds everyone, that I am actually working

### **5. Set Ground Rules With the People in Your Space**

Set ground rules with other people in your home or who share your space for when you work. If you have children, they need clear rules about what they can and cannot do during that time.

Working from home can be invasive in your personal life - you are always home and near your work, then your work creeps into your home life. Set hours and boundaries.

Communicate expectations with anyone who will be home with you – if they do not know, they cannot act.

### **6. Schedule Breaks**

A lunch break and 15-minute 'tea' breaks can help. I set my timer and make a cup of tea – no matter what. I force the break, have a breather.

Exercise – something simple will do ... a little moment goes a long way.

Although taking breaks might seem counterproductive, research has apparently shown that taking short breaks can actually increase productivity and creativity levels. You need a work-life balance.

Work short, five-minute breaks into your daily schedule, or even make them a part of your 'reward' system – your 'bonus' for completing a task.

### **7. Avoid distractions**

Even a radio in the background frustrates me but may work for you – Netflix etc. is definitely out!

Stay Off Social Media - I think we can agree that we are all guilty of this one from time to time. Social media can be a giant time-suck if you are not careful.

### **8. To do list / planner**

For some a to-do list helps focus their mind / activity. Mine is a whiteboard – it is satisfying wiping an entry off as it is completed ... do I need to get out more?

As long as I have a plan, a list of daily tasks on my personal to-do list, it does not matter if or how I may be interrupted, as long as I get things done by the end of the day.

### **9. Leave Home – if possible / allowed**

Leave the building at least once a day. Your body needs to move. Plus, the fresh air and natural light will do you good – a garden is hopefully available.

### **10. Don't Hesitate to Ask for What You Need**

Need something, ask.

A power lead / extension cord is basically all I need ... but I was reminded today my PC sits on a desk ... do you have such a facility, do you need it?

We have quality, fast equipment – if you need something to help make the most of the resources, let me know.

Can you work comfortably?

### **11. Keep a Dedicated Office Space**

In an ideal world, you would have a dedicated office. It helps others to understand you are working, not at home on holiday, for fun. The luxury of such a space is not available to all.

### **12. Socialise With Colleagues**

Loneliness, disconnect, and isolation are common problems in remote work life. Stay in touch. Interacting with other humans is normal, natural.

Email is good 😊 let's create a supportive community and stay sane

### **13. Be Positive**

I like succinct and clear messages – but I am not the best at providing them 😊 ... I can hear you chuckling!

Be understanding of non-verbal (unaccompanied by expressions and body language) communication. It is all too easy to get the wrong end of the stick. One limitation of working from home is that messaging sometimes falls short of expressing ideas or thoughts clearly. It is easy to think a quick remark was made to be rude or even flippant. Remind yourself not to take responses offensively.

At times like this a little negativity can go a long way with many not knowing how to respond for fear of adding 'fuel to the fire'.

Old adage 'nothing good to say, say nothing'.

New adage 'something good to say, say it'

Had a good 'result'; an insured or insurer praised you ... tell me. I will circulate.

#### **14. Take Advantage of Your Perks**

You are working from home ... there are benefits, enjoy them.

Try to eat healthy meals and snacks.

#### **15. Don't Be Too Hard on Yourself**

Good remote employees have a reputation for being extremely disciplined - it takes serious focus to do any full-time office job from an unconventional space.

But we all let our attention drift sometimes. If you find yourself working one minute and checking Amazon the next, don't reprimand yourself too harshly - cut yourself some slack, then get back to work.

#### **16. End Your Day With a Routine**

Just as you should start your day with a routine, create a habit that signals the close of the workday. It might be a sign off by email – if you like the idea

Turn off the machine when the day is over

Above all else, figure out what works best for you.