

WORKING FROM HOME DURING COVID-19?



The coronavirus (COVID-19) is presenting new and unique challenges. We are navigating uncharted waters with this virus, making it important to find new ways to work and interact while also taking care of our mental health and well-being. Many are teleworking full-time for the first time, isolated from co-workers, friends and family.

Our daily living routines are disrupted causing added anxiety, stress and strain – physically, mentally, and financially. It is completely natural for this disruption and uncertainty to lead to anxiety and stress.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO KEEP YOU SANE AS YOU LEARN TO NAVIGATE – AND EMBRACE – THE WORK FROM HOME EXPERIENCE.

KEEP A ROUTINE AND STICK TO IT. Make sure you devise a daily routine that mimics what you did prior to social distancing directives. This means getting up at the same hour every day (set an alarm clock if you need to), showering and getting dressed as if you were going to work outside the home (and direct your children to do the same), and having “work hours” when you focus on industrious activities and “home hours” where you focus on family togetherness and relaxation. Make sure you stick to a schedule every day, even on weekends (although the schedule can vary more on those days to allow additional time for leisure, relaxation, and taking care of needs for your home).

DESIGNATE AREAS OF THE HOME FOR VARIOUS ACTIVITIES. Certain areas of the home should be set aside for work (or homework for kids) and relaxation. Do not conflate the two. It can be tempting to bring your laptop to the dinner table or to work in bed. Don't do this! Make sure that you have a space in the home, whether it is a room or table or corner of the house, where you work. When you are done with work, you leave those designated areas and spend time in the other areas of the house. Don't return to your “workspace” until the next scheduled work period.

FIND CREATIVE WAYS TO SOCIALLY ENGAGE. We are social animals and we need meaningful social engagement. We can do this by making sure we touch base with loved ones in real life by calls or video chat. This can be additionally bolstered by having a shared experience. For example, eat lunch or dinner with a loved one over video chat. Watch a movie together while on video chat and share commentary and opinions about the film during or after. Make sure you do this a few times a week.

MOVE AROUND EVERY HOUR. Part of the stress related to cabin fever is being stuck in one place. And certainly with these directives, we may feel out of control and stuck in our situation without any way out. Physically moving around every hour, even if it is within your home, can do wonders. So set a timer that will go off on the hour, and when it rings, get up from your seated position, and take a mini-lap around your home, tend to a chore, or simply stand and stretch.

TAKE DEEP BREATHS AND COMBAT DEFEATIST THINKING. In these unprecedented times, it is easy to lose hope or feel absolutely inefficacious about how you can improve the circumstances. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed by the challenges, take deep breaths. This resets your brain and body and tells it to chill out and veer away from a state of emergency or fight or flight.

OPEN THE SHADES (AND GET OUTSIDE). Whenever possible, try to get outside, even for a few minutes a day, to take in the fresh air and the outdoors. Research shows this is especially effective in the morning hours to align with human beings' circadian rhythm which can also help promote better quality sleep. If you are unable to get outside, open the shades. This can help ward off claustrophobia and boost your mood.

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If you or a family member are feeling overwhelmed, call to access any of the professional services offered by your Employee Assistance Program. We will assist in connecting you with the right provider for face-to-face or E-Counseling services.

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