

M HEALTH FAIRVIEW

WORKING REMOTELY:

HOW TO STAY PRODUCTIVE & CONNECTED

Purpose

Working remotely can bring a sense of liberty, but it can also feel isolating at times. You might have a harder time staying focused and maintaining a strong output. Consider these tips for how to remain connected with your team and your work and stay productive.

Increase your face time



We know from research that face-to-face communication is best, even if done remotely over a computer screen. This is because non-verbal communication improves our ability to relate, engage and establish meaningful interactions with individuals simply by using our tone of voice, eye contact, facial expressions, body posture/cues, and more. Consider how you can incorporate more face-to-face time throughout your day.

Try this: Identify at least 2-4 meetings or collaboration time every day that can be adjusted to a virtual face-to-face meeting using Microsoft Teams or another program to support increased connection and productivity.

Maintain social interaction

Don't neglect those one-on-one conversations or regular touch bases with team members and your leader. **Moments of interpersonal connection are important because they foster meaning in our work and make it more enjoyable.** Give your team members a call to check in on them, send an email, or a HEARTbeat e-card. Research has shown that interpersonal communication enables relationships to develop trust and improves the performance of teams. Have a conversation with your team about how you can create opportunities for virtual social interaction.

Minimize online & mobile distractions

While at times it's ok to check social media and your favorite online shops, websites or blogs, **the less time you spend online the better and more productive you will be.** Consider removing distractions during your work day that make it easy to go online. One way to do this is by moving your cell phone or personal device at least 5-10 feet away from you and your work station. This requires you to get up and check the device if you get a



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message. Plus, are less tempted to just ‘pick up your device’ and check notifications or scroll through sites. Consider disabling app notifications on your phone so that they don’t pop up while you’re working. With fewer notifications, you’ll be able to put your phone down when you’re not using it, rather than getting sucked into a loop of ‘just a quick check’.

Create structure: Plan your days by creating a schedule

We’re more likely to follow a schedule for time and stay on track when we have thoughtfully planned out each day. Include time for breaks throughout the day and lunch.



Consider your morning routine: Find a new routine that has the same kind of affect for you and stick with it. Wake up at the same time every morning, have your cup of coffee, listen to a brief mindfulness meditation and then “head to work.” Having a consistent routine prior to the beginning of your day will ensure you have a productive start and feel ready to jump in.

Create a workspace

It can be difficult to get focused if you don’t have an environment that says “work.” Create a space that will allow you to set the intention that once you are there you are focused on the task of work. Setting up a place at home where you work and committing to consistently working there (your mini “home office”) will make you more comfortable and productive when you’re working remotely. Surround yourself with objects you find motivating. Once you leave that space you can allow yourself the opportunity to relax and take a breath.



Consider this: [Tips for Creating A Home Office That Promotes Health, Comfort and Creativity](#)

Take breaks – *away from your desk*

Research tells us the importance of stepping away from our workspace during lunch or breaks. A change of scenery can do a lot for increasing your productivity. We know that taking breaks and getting up to **move** is the best way to stay productive. Consider going for a walk around the block, doing some stretches or even jumping jacks to circulate blood flow throughout your body and wake up your muscles. Get outside to get fresh air when you can! There’s no wrong way to move around, and you can do it even if your space is small.

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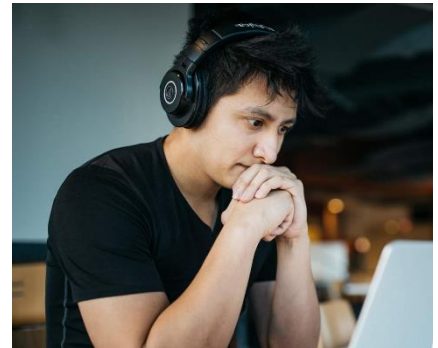
Dress for your success

It might not sound important to be dressed as if you're physically going to work but, psychologically, it helps! It can also mentally help you feel better and support an effective transition from work to home life. In addition, since you'll be having virtual meetings, you'll want to ensure you're dressed appropriately.

Resist the urge to 'power through' tasks

Have you had that feeling of getting 'just one more thing done' before you take a break, go to lunch, or end your workday? We know from research that forcing yourself to power through a certain task when what you need is a break can actually make you less productive.

What you can do: Set specific work hours and stick to them! As important as work is, your personal life is where you recharge yourself to do the work that needs to be done. Set a designated time where you disconnect from work and take the opportunity to be you.



**For more information on productivity and maintaining connections, consider these articles:*

- [3 Tips to Avoid WFH Burnout – Harvard Business Review](#)
- [Seven Tips for Staying Productive While Working from Home – Forbes](#)

If you are still struggling to feel productive or connected or need support around an effective work environment, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is here to help. The EAP offers up to 6 free sessions with a licensed counselor to talk about anything and help you create a plan for success! If you have questions about the Employee Assistance Program, please reach out: 612-672-2195 or 800-CALL-EAP, eap@fairview.org.