

13 TIPS FOR WORKING FROM HOME (ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU AREN'T USED TO IT)

Many of us are working from home in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. For some, the experience of working from home is new, especially for a prolonged period of time. With schools closed there is another layer of complexity for those with children; even if you do not have children, you may be sharing your space with another adult who is also now at home; work provides a lot of social interaction – more than you may realize. It goes without saying that these are very different times, which require new routines.

SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

It is easy to feel lost or frustrated without a clear structure for your day.

- 1. Maintain your schedule.** Follow your normal routine by getting up at the same time, eat breakfast, and be camera ready as many meetings may be video calls.
- 2. Shut the door.** Designate a specific part of your house to work during working hours and let everyone know that you are not to be disturbed. This might require some negotiation if someone else is working from home as well or there are children in your home.
- 3. Set a schedule.** Structure your workday by planning out tasks that need to take priority and how many hours you are going to spend on each job.

DON'T FORGET THE LOGISTICAL STUFF

Don't forget these tidbits when working from home

- 1. Know and follow your organization's privacy and security policies.** When working from home, you might need to take additional steps to meet your organization's standards for privacy and security. Make sure that you know what to do, and if you are not sure, ask your supervisor.
- 2. Make sure to check in and out each day.** Remember to check in every morning and check out each evening so that your leader knows that you are safe.
- 3. Pay attention to IH communications.** Read or all communications from IH Leadership. Policies and practices may change quickly as the situation warrants. Your manager is also there for support. If you have not heard anything for a while, it is okay to reach out to confirm that everything is the same.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Make sure to take care of yourself, you are important

- 4. Stop and move every couple of hours.** You need to be more conscious about getting up for movement or stretch breaks and getting a bit of sun several times during the day. You will need to be intentional about this and should set a timer if you need to.
- 5. Maintain or start regular exercise.** Getting regular exercise to get your heart rate up is needed, over and above moving or stretching every couple of hours. Your physical health requires this, as does your mental health.
- 6. Watch what you eat.** With the kitchen so close to your desk it can be tempting to overeat. Prep a lunch and prepare healthy snacks to combat this urge.
- 7. Make time for social connections.** Video calls are better than telephone for staying connected, especially if the call has more than two people. Plan specific times in the day to connect with others, and make sure that it happens. Additionally, just reach out to colleagues when you feel the need to connect. The reason does not need to be about work. Just checking in with someone is great. Feeling connected is an important part of your well-being and will ultimately make you more productive overall.
- 8. Plan your non-working time as well.** Use the time to do something meaningful to you. This is a good time to do things that you can do at home, which you might not have had time to do before – learn a new skill, organize your home, connect with your family. Do not focus on what you cannot do, but what you can do.

HAVE CHILDREN?

- 1. Understand that they need a routine as much or more than you do.** With school closures, parents at home, and community activities cancelled, new routines must be built. Getting up, getting dressed, a time to play, a time to learn at home, a time to do chores, a time to spend time with you are all important. This is a good opportunity to work with your children create these routines, which can also help them feel some control over the changes that are happening.
- 2. Build time for your kids into your workday routine.** Your work might need to be completed in blocks of time instead of a straight eight-hour stretch. Have specific times when you can give your children uninterrupted attention, even if it is just during the lunch hour. Take turns in childcare with another adult in your home, if possible. Build times in your child's schedule to work beside you. Schools and daycare have time for quiet work or play. The same thing can happen at home