



realising TRUE potential

Tips for Effective Homeworking During Isolation

Effective Homeworking

To work effectively at home you need to make sure that you consider a number of different areas. They are:

Your Work

- What you have to do, the work you have to deliver, the deadlines you have to meet, the KPI's

Your Management

- Being managed and being a manager, your relationship, your expectations of each other, your level of trust

Your Environment

- Where you sit, how you are organised

Your Mental Health

- How you are feeling, your level of positivity, your wellbeing

Your Physical Health

- Your level of fitness, how well you are looking after yourself

Your Home

- The people you live with, the rest of the “things” that are associated with where you live



You need to think about all of these different areas to make sure that they are all addressed and also kept in balance, if one area e.g. Your Work begins to dominate all the others then you are storing up trouble.

Equally if you ignore one area e.g. Your Environment you will cause problems in the all of the others.

Over the following pages we will give you some hints and tips on how to deal with each of the areas, pick the ones that you think could work for you and try them for the a week.

At the end of the week reflect on what has worked for you. What you want to do again. What you want to try differently next week. Keep dipping in and out of the ideas to find the ones that work best for you!

Your Work



- Do a big mind map of everything you think you can do from home over the period of confinement
- Consider how to work with your own energy levels – attacking high concentration work when you feel good, less tricky things when your energy starts to slump
- Take this time to work on you, your Emotional Intelligence, technical upskilling
- Have a daily routine and keep to it – structure will help you to stay productive
- Structure your day as you would in the office, when you will start, stop and what breaks you will have
- Break for coffee, lunch and tea away from your dedicated workspace and outside if possible – don't be tempted to just open YouTube sat at your desk!



Your Work



- Commute to work ... do something that makes your brain say ... “I’m at work now” even if you only put your coat on walk round the room and take it off again!

Alternatively;

- Do something work related as soon as you wake up – as this is a great way to get started and stops morning sluggishness eating into your schedule – have some breakfast the first time you feel like you need a break
- Make a plan in advance and keep to it as far as is possible
- Have music that uplifts you in the morning
- Make planning for tomorrow the last thing you do at the end of your working day



Your Work



- Ask the question “what’s the best use of my time right now?” and do that!
- The temptation is to replicate the normal office chat via e-mail, which is fine, but at times you need to go into stealth mode and respond to nothing in order to really focus on what you are doing
- Have a definite “end” of the day. Decide when it is and work towards it, or there will always be *one more job*
- BANJO – Bang A Nasty Job Off – as soon in the day as possible – so that the worst thing is done!
- Get proficient with the remote tools ZOOM, Skype etcetera
- Agree how you will stay in touch with your colleagues – weekly, daily calls etcetera



Your Manager



- Be clear with your manager on your working routine
- Discuss with your manager if you have any issues i.e. home schooling, small children at home
- Clarify objectives/tasks to be achieved and break them down into weekly and daily actions
- Set up a good schedule for communication with each other and the team
- If you feel you are going to be less productive at home than you normally are, have a conversation with your manager to set expectations on both sides – communication is King and Queen, don't leave room for assumptions on deadlines, outputs etcetera
- Build trust with your manager – doing what you say you will, when you said you would. If you are taking a break to deal with the kids, tell your manager!
- It's not Business as Usual – so make sure you know what your manager wants you to focus on?



Your Manager



- If you are a manager – keep giving feedback – just be aware of the potentially negative impact of an e-mail in comparison to a quick chat in the office
- If you can't contact people immediately don't assume that they are slacking. They may have an emergency to deal with, be having a quick break with their children etcetera
- Try and get face to face via some Video Conferencing software (ZOOM, WebEx, Teams etcetera)
- When Video Conferencing make sure you look at the other people, especially the ones who are not talking, you can still use your emotional intelligence to spot those who seem to be struggling, feel shut out, frustrated etcetera
- Build trust with your team by (ironically) demonstrating you trust them
- Keep great notes from meetings and have really clear actions – circulate these asap after a meeting with owners, deadlines and anything else you can think of that can remove ambiguity



Your Environment



- Set up your environment – even if it is just a table in a corner. Make sure you have a dedicated and consistent workspace that is conducive to working – wherever possible don't sit on the couch or your bed
- Work out how you can cut out noise – if need be, work out a schedule with the people you live with for when you need it really quiet
- Get up and move away from your desk regularly for five minutes to stretch and invigorate
- Use the technology to stay connected – a quick ZOOM, WebEx or Teams meeting where you see your colleagues can help you feel less isolated
- Make sure you turn off your computer at the end of your working day, it will help you know the day is over and it helps your PC recover if you have been using video conferencing software a lot



Your Environment



- Have something on low in the background – music, the Discovery Channel on the TV, anything so it’s just loud enough to feel like a hum but not too loud that you get distracted -it can stop you feeling alone
- Make your work environment nice (you can decide what nice means to you) – you could be spending quite a long time in it so make it as pleasant and as comfortable as you can
- Tidy up at the end of the day so your brain knows you are going *home*
- If possible, arrange your workspace so you aren’t facing areas people will be in or pass through – when they move you will probably make eye contact and they will see that as an invitation to talk



Your Mental Health



- Have personal goals for this period – whether it is for the week or the month or longer
- Look after yourself, take time to shower and dress every day as you normally would. Save PJ days for weekends!
- Speak to 1 friend every other day at least – on line and face to face is best
- Limit TV – try and choose what you want to watch rather than mindlessly watching
- Limit social media – too much scrolling can do your head in and waste vast amounts of time! Turn off notifications, remove them from toolbars, sign-out or even download an App (e.g. Stay Focused) that blocks you from using them at certain parts of the day
- Be intentional with everything you do – if you are playing with the children be mindful and intentional



Your Mental Health



- If you start feeling stressed, take a break and practice some deep breathing – try www.headspace.com for some great ideas
- Talk to someone if you are feeling anxious
- Don't assume that it's only you that feels anxious or even simply out of sorts. You will probably find that many other people are having feelings of anxiety in this difficult time
- Have a look at the Kubler Ross Transition Curve (it's about loss and change) as it can help you accept the feelings and then deal with them
- Try finding something to be grateful for e.g. It's great not having to commute, I can have lunch with my family, I can work uninterrupted etcetera
- Keep a record of what you achieve each day, progress you have made, successes you have – no matter how small



Your Physical Health



- Exercise every day – at least 30 minutes, have a look at YouTube for exercise classes/routines you can follow – there are all levels of energy and preference
- Eat as healthily as possible. Avoid going to the fridge every time you are bored
- Every time you find yourself approaching the fridge for a less than healthy snack, go and clean your teeth instead
- Drink plenty of water
- The Snooze button is your enemy – touch it and be prepared for weeks of undisciplined lethargy
- Sugar can have a really detrimental effect on mental health causing spikes so try to cut down as much as possible
- Your circadian rhythm is your routine of sleeping, waking, feeling hungry etcetera – don't mess with it, by staying in bed longer because you don't need to commute – it will mess you up!



Your Physical Health



- Work when you feel the most productive – listen to your Circadian rhythm.
- Do a few minutes of meditation to clear your mind before you start work – see Headspace for some tips on meditation and mindfulness
- Breakfast away from your e-mails and the news, interact with the other humans, felines, canines etcetera
- Our bodies want and need regular movement – so make sure you get up and move – use whatever space you have to do something – if you can walk then walk. If your space is really limited try something like “chair yoga” (loads of examples on YouTube)
- Even if you are not physically going to work you still need to sleep. So if before all this madness you had a good sleep pattern, don’t spoil it by staying up late. If you didn’t have a good sleep pattern, now is your chance to find one. Loads of websites can give you advice on getting better sleep, have a look and pick the ones that work for you.



Your Home



- List all those jobs you haven't had time to do around the house and create a plan of when you will do them e.g. Have a target to complete at least two jobs from the home to do list weekly – that way your brain knows you are dealing with it and not keep nagging and stressing you about it
- Don't get obsessed by cleaning and tidying every day – stick to your normal routines
- Communicate expectations to the people you live with – what you want from them and what you promise them
- Have clear signs for when you cannot be disturbed e.g. close the door when you are definitely NOT available, or only put your headset on you really can't be disturbed
- Video call (WhatsApp, Messenger etcetera) your absent loved ones in your breaks, seeing them face to face will help you feel connected and help you feel less guilty for not being with them during the crisis



Your Home



- Ask your loved ones questions and really listen to their answers it will help them feel the connection we are all missing right now
- Try to do something together in the evening – play a boardgame, watch some Netflix, find a box-set you can all enjoy (or at least pretend to if you have to endure Peppa Pig yet again). The key thing is to do something enjoyable together that's 100% focused on the people you live with.
- Develop polite sign off phrases e.g. Well I really must get back to what I was doing



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