Tips for Working from Home

Due to recent events, many of us find ourselves working remotely from our homes. Such a transition can be perform with greater ease if we implement a couple of recommendations and some planning.

Step one consider your work environment. Designate an area of your home, specifically for getting work done and commit to working in this space every day. This could be an empty or spare bedroom that you convert to a home office. If you are pressed for space, you can set up a desk for your computer and office supplies in the corner of an occupied room like the dining room or den. It is recommended to pick a location that will allow for a comfortable and quiet workspace that will allow you to focus on the task at hand.

Planning allows you to create an office that works for you. Attempt to design an office that is functional and conducive to you. We are not recommending that you need to run out and purchase a top of the line desk, but you do want a workspace that has the room and capabilities for you to perform your work responsibilities in a comfortable manner. You may want to consider attaching a monitor arm to your desk or table so that you maximize your desk space. Also the addition of a filing cabinet will help you to stay organized and clutter free. Remember, that you are creating a space that you will be working from daily, so make one that works for you. Purchase comfortable and functional furniture and equipment with ergonomic considerations. Invest in what you need to comfortably and efficiently do your job. OSHA has an ergonomic self-assessment survey available at https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/checklist_evaluation.html .

Next, look to organize your time. It can be challenging to keep track of what you have to do throughout your workday when working from home. Start your day by reviewing your priorities for the day and for the week. Take time to document tasks and responsibilities and place them in order of importance and then place them in a calendar or task list. We all know that when working from home that it can be easy to lose sight of priorities, tasks, and deadlines, but with organizations we can stay on point and alleviate stress. When you make your task list, stick to it. It may be tempting to just leap into your email, but with a little extra focus, you can keep moving forward while working from home.

- Set goals and time limits for each task

- Utilize tools such as online calendars and task list with reminders

- After you complete each task, cross it off the list. This simple technique is both effective and fulfilling**.**

- Always consider what is working for you and what could use a little help and keep positive.

Avoid the tempting trap of television and social media. Social media, television and text messaging can be a giant time-suck and distraction if you are not careful. You should take some time to get familiar with your town's/company's social media guidelines. If you love using social media, then you may want to make it a habit to shut off social media notifications during the day and consider muting your notifications on your phone so that you can focus on the job on hand.

Working from home can get pretty lonely, especially if you are single or live alone. Dedicate time to have meeting with your team so that you all stay connected. Advise your coworkers of the dates and hours of your work, and the recommended form of contact so that others know when and how to communicate with you. A common limitation of working from home is that team chat messaging sometimes falls short of expressing ideas clearly. Remind yourself not to take seemingly short or direct responses offensively.

Remember to place some focus on you and your needs. Self-care and Exercise are shown to naturally boost endorphins, which in turn increases happiness, enjoyment, and interest levels, all of which are important for productivity. Regularly stretching helps you maintain great posture and ease tension. At a minimum, stretch throughout the day so you don't get sore or hinder your quality of life. If your day allows, take a lunch break and go for a walk or do some light yoga

When you are home all day, family and friends might interrupt you without knowing better. This can be difficult, especially if you have young children at home, or have multiple pets all of whom want your attention. Set boundaries with your family while you work. Set and stick to specific work hours and communicate those hours clearly with your family and friends.

Computer safety is always a consideration.   Just because you're not in the office doesn't mean you're not vulnerable. Your work computer is a target for thieves and hackers, so take care to work securely.

- Be aware of how your employer's network policies such as the use of Wi-Fi, personal devices, and more.

- Employ a "trust but verify" mentality for documents sent to your inbox.

- Use a business-grade Virtual Private Network (VPN) for encryption. Or your employer's approved VPN solution.

- Know how to get IT assistance and report security threats.

- Close your room's door to avoid disclosing sensitive information to family members or visitors.

- Keep work and personal websites, emails, and web browsing separate.

- Don't slack off on your duty to keep your home office equipment secure.