



The Productive Guide to Working from Home

How to stay connected and continue
to collaborate





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■ Introduction



With the changes of today's contingent workforce, rapid technology developments and increased business continuity activities, remote working is nothing new. As organizations realize the importance of remote work to continue business operations, keep employees happy with 72%* of the professionals aspire for workplace flexibility, and stay competitive, the rate of working from home continues to increase.

Whether we are working remotely due the variety of job functions or required due to business continuity processes to optimise the benefits of working from home, including a better worklife balance, increased efficiency and virtual meetings in the comfort of our own settings, there are some tips that can help.

*LinkedIn released the 2019 Global Talent Trends report

Working Enablement

When the opportunity to work from a home location is either selected by the employee or selected for them, understanding their employment guidelines and job function are still as important as if they were working in the office.

Both managers and employees, with support from their hr department need to set the working from home ground rules and align expectations from the outset.

- 1. Does the role need to be supervised**
- 2. Has the Worker received the necessary information and training to do the work safely?**
- 3. Will the worker be working same office hours/breaks as though they were in the office?**



Safety First

Similarly, as we would ensure our office supports a positive work health and safety approach, so too should we invest in ensuring of working environment is the same.

Fire and Evacuation

1. Is the work area tidy
2. Are waste materials regularly disposed of
3. Are exit routes clear
4. Do you have an escape plan
5. Is a smoke alarm fitted
6. Do you have a suitable fire extinguisher readily at hand?

First Aid

1. Is there adequate first aid available based on the nature of the hazards?
2. Is the worker aware of the company's incident reporting procedure, who to report incidents to and has access to incident reporting forms?
3. Is the worker aware of the company's rehabilitation or injury management policy and procedures?

Security

Regardless of the working location, organisations are still bound by the GDPR, NBD data breach with Over 60%* of attacks occurring inside an organisation there are plenty of opportunities to mitigate that exposure through thorough management of network access, data backup and retrieval practices, end user administration and password policies, application updates and human/social engineering security policies still need to be managed.

*2015 IBM Security Intelligence Survey

1. Is there a separate office/area available to work in? Where is it located in the home?
2. Are there any sensitive documents photos within the view of work area and workstation
3. Have you facilities to ensure that any confidential files taken home can be locked away when not in use?
4. Is your laptop, phone and printer device security up to date

Workspace Ergonomics

Home based work environment clarifying if the employee is experiencing any symptoms or difficulties when performing work tasks and taking measurements of the workstation to ensure compliance with Australian Standards and an individual's anthropometrics such as recommending workstation adjustments, modifications or equipment to eliminate risks identified. From providing education on safe work practices and improved postural awareness to utilising ergonomic desks, chairs and footrest meet Australian Standards.

- 1. Lighting is adequate (able to read / refer to documentation without eye strain)**
- 2. Noise levels are not distracting from task concentration**
- 3. Ventilation (natural or artificial) is adequate**
- 4. Do you have appropriate heating/cooling**
- 5. Are floors clear of trip hazards on a daily basis**
- 6. Personalise your work station as much as possible.**



Workstation and Technology

Internet

Get your internet in order

A solid internet connection is a key part of making remote work, well, work. Without it, you could experience choppy video, unable to share files, poor audio quality, and even dropped calls

Check your bandwidth

Bandwidth is the maximum rate, or speed, that data can transfer across a network. Different things can affect bandwidth such as the types of applications you are running and the number of devices on the network, and you'll want to choose an internet package from your service provider with enough bandwidth for virtual meetings. To check your current bandwidth and the amount you'll need, you can search for free online speed tests and calculators such as Speedtest, FAST.com, or speed checkers with your Internet Service Provider (ISP).

Close bandwidth-intensive applications

To get the best audio and video quality on your video meetings, consider closing other bandwidth hogs like streaming services (YouTube, Spotify, Netflix, etc.), cloud file sharing apps (OneDrive, Google Drive, Dropbox), social media apps, and video games.

Limit the number of devices connected to the network *<Pexip>*

The more laptops, tablets, and smartphones using the internet, the slower the speed will be across your network. Keep this in mind when kids come home from school... The moment they fire up the video games or hop on social media, you'll likely see a drop in performance for your bandwidth-intensive work apps like video conferencing.

Try a hard-wired connection <Pexip>

If you're experiencing call quality issues, try plugging in an ethernet cable instead of using WiFi. A hard-wired connection will provide a much more consistent, high-quality experience than a wireless connection.

Monitor

The setup of your monitor on your desk will depend on how many screens you utilise and the frequency and percentage of use of each screen. No matter if you use a single screen or dual screens, it is important to ensure that the distance, height and angle of your screens are setup correctly

1. Is positioned at approximately an arms distance when in an upright seated position
2. Is positioned at an appropriate height
3. Is the Monitor is positioned away from direct light sources and is free from glare / reflection
4. The computer screen located at an appropriate height for the individual to avoid extremes of head and neck flexion

IT

Specific hazards can arise from using a laptop for prolonged periods of time.

Laptop use without modification should be limited to short durations due to the potential effects on the neck, shoulder and arm muscles.

1. If using a laptop, this is either raised, or this is positioned on a docking station
2. Are your credentials up to date?
3. Can you login to your

- 
- a. Operating System,
 - b. Office Application Suite (O365, Chrome + GSuite, Apple OS),
 - c. Emails (Mail, Meetings, Individual and Shared mailbox, DL profiles)
 - d. Browser
 - e. SaaS
 - f. CRM
 - g. ERP
 - h. Collaboration Systems
4. Can you connect to your wireless network? Do you need you access a Virtual Private Network
 5. Do you have sufficient internet access for data, voice and video communication
 6. Can you access your local, shared and network drives
 7. Can you access your critical files
 8. Can you archive and recall backed up files
 9. Can you print, copy scan (and in some cases fax)
 10. Do you have an IT support helpdesk phone number of contact details

Keyboard and Mouse

Positioning of the keyboard and mouse is integral in maintaining good ergonomics. Poor placement, usage and control over the mouse and keyboard can cause discomfort and reduce your productivity. When setting up and using your equipment, it is important

1. Elbows remain close to side of body when keyboard and mouse are utilised
2. Mouse is at the same level as the keyboard
3. Separate keyboard and mouse is used if utilising laptop compute for extended periods

Audio-Visual

Virtual meetings can bring you face-to-face with others and help you to strengthen relationships with colleagues, partners and network. Utilise the power of HD video, great audio quality, and other tools like chat, screen sharing, live streaming, and recording, you can experience all the benefits for an in-person meeting from the comfort of your own home.

The monitor should be set up directly in front of you. Your eyes should be level with the top third of the screen and ready for video conferencing, streaming, or recording webcam.

1. Universally compatible headphones to work with common calling applications across most all platforms and operating systems.
2. Again ensure appropriate light and noise are filtered by using video conferencing etiquette.
3. Avoid lost in translation emails and consider hopping on a quick video call, get everyone into a video meeting, you can discuss projects and come to a decision in real time.
4. Scheduling virtual happy hours or lunch dates to catch up on the latest gossip, or simply leave a virtual window open on your desktop so you can talk to colleagues throughout the day.

■ Make sure you can access your files from anywhere

Keeps everything safe Broken computers and missing files are a home worker's worst nightmare. So to avoid any unnecessary stress, make use of the cloud. By uploading all of your important work – and even the not-so-important stuff – onto an online cloud storage platform, you can keep it safe and organized, making working from home easier for you and your team members.

It is important to make sure that your cloud storage platform meets the requirements and guidelines of your organization. If you are unsure of what systems or solutions to use, check with your IT group and they can help guide you.

Collaborate

Uploading documents to the cloud makes it super easy to collaborate. With everything in one centralized location, your team members can easily find, edit and add to your ideas. Cloud platforms like Microsoft OneDrive, Google Drive, and Dropbox are great for this type of work. They're quick, easy to navigate, and largely free to use.

If your business requires another level of data security and you need to access your files from a local drive, protected enclave, or record management system such as Docuware, or a Sharepoint through a VPN make sure your comply with your organisations file sharing and security policies.





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■ Healthy Mind – Healthy Body

There maybe times when working remotely can be hard and at times lonely. That means getting off the couch, and definitely out of bed and mentally you're ready to enter the 'work zone'. Maintain a healthy diet and sleeping habit.

Keep your routine

Make sure you still set yourself a solid start time as per your usual routine for work. Schedule times and appointment sin your calendar to commence a task or meeting and block time in to prepare 30 mins earlier. That means have showered, have breakfast, completed morning household chores, updated yourself on news and non-work-related social updates.

Take breaks out of the house

Set breaks in your schedule and take the opportunity to get out of your workspace at times - even a few breaks each day to take a walk around the block can make a huge difference to your mood and ability to focus. Get out in the sunlight and stretch your legs to get the blood flowing.

For those who rely on being active, take the opportunity to improvise your sessions from the gym and exploring both your physical home space as well as virtual training lessons.

Expand your mind

Schedule the time and take the opportunity for personal growth and take on virtual learning programs for personal development or take up that unit that might lead into the next formal training session that you have been meaning to do.

Set goals and deal with distractions

To keep yourself motivated, it's helpful to set some aspirational goals for how much work you hope to get done in a given day. Keep records of what you do, and then see if you can top your personal best from day to day.

Anyone working from home inevitably gets distracted, and it's obviously even worse if you have family around you at the moment. Try to keep yourself distracted in the same ways you did at work. Write your To-do list and schedule in blocks of time for concentrating to get tasks done, followed by scheduled times to take a break and communicate that with your family as you need to.

Deal with being disconnected

Feeling disconnected is something we all share in common, and today there are technologies that can fill the help bridge that gap. Simply pick up the phone and call your colleagues or stakeholders or utilise the communication technology to communicate and connect.

If you feel as though your productivity is regressing, cut yourself some slack, talk to your managers and team. However if you find you're not comfortable discussing your challenges with your regular network try reaching out to support organisations such as Lifeline, Beyond Blue or your organisations workplace support.



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