

Best Practices for Remote Work

Containing Coronavirus means many of us are entering a new world of working remotely from home. This handout was created from a March 25, 2020 webinar. Slides can be found at: <https://isu.custom-social.com/covid-19-response>.



Reprioritize and focus on output



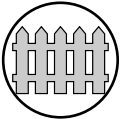
Get your WFH infrastructure set up



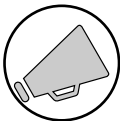
Create workspace(s)



Adhere to routines



Set work boundaries



Be strategic about communication



Focus on positives



Don't neglect workplace culture



Learn new skills

Best Practices for Remote Work

Reprioritize and Focus on Output

- Do your job wherever and however you can – be proactive
- Streamline – identify essential work and areas of focus that can be done while working remotely
- Eliminate non-essential meetings
- Consolidate to fewer collaboration tools – don't try too many
- Be disciplined! Clarify team rules and make sure everyone knows them
- Learn to be more efficient with meetings (attend upcoming webinar – Managing Virtual Teams for more info)
- Consider creating a list of what you will deliver by the end of the day ([Pro-Tip: analyze your to-do list](#))

Get your WFH Infrastructure Set Up

- WFH? Stands for WORK FROM HOME
- Does your organization have IT Help Lines open?
- What can you order online that could help? Example: setting up docking stations to TVs as second monitors.
- Headphones, your new best friend
- Technology tools - more coming on that...
- How's your internet?
- Don't forget how powerful your phone is - mobile apps

Create Workspace(s)

- Your head is your most important workspace. You will need to have your head in the game to stay focused and avoid distractions.
- Where can you reasonably work? What is your ideal work environment?
- Where can you work when multiple people are in the house?
- Do you need to close a door for calls?
- Do not work from your bed!
- Avoid distractions, e.g., the news, dirty dishes, etc.

Adhere to Routines

- Develop rituals and have a disciplined way of managing the day
- Schedule a start and an end time
- Have a rhythm
- Take a shower, get dressed, even if it's not what you'd usually wear to work, then get started on the day's activities
- If you're used to moving physically, make sure you build that into your day
- If you're an extrovert and accustomed to a lot of contact and collaboration with others, make sure that still happens
- Ask yourself: How will I protect myself from feeling lonely or isolated and stay healthy, productive, and vibrant? Create that for yourself.

From Harvard Business Review: [15 Questions about Remote Work Answered](#)

Set Work Boundaries

- Try to set office hours and let your supervisor and colleagues know
- Don't over-promise
- Learn how to say 'no' well
- Keep your calendar up to date
- Time block for tasks and use your calendar to block non-meeting work time as a signal to colleagues
- Take necessary breaks just as you would at the office
- Don't shortchange mental health (upcoming webinar)
- Check in with your team if you are a manager and check in with your boss if not
- Focus on positives
- Over communicate

Be Strategic About Communication

"Consistent behaviors help others predict what we do, and in turn help them to understand us — and we all benefit from being understood. You can make that easier for others by establishing a clear personal etiquette and sticking to it consistently."

- Don't conflate brief communications and clear communications
- Don't bombard your team with messages
- Establish communication norms
- See the hidden opportunities in written communications
- Create intentional space for celebration

From Harvard Business Review: [How to Collaborate Effectively If Your Team is Remote](#)

Focus on Positives

- Figure out what energizes you
- Take micro-breaks
- Take advantage of re-claimed time
- Be flexible, especially with kids at home

Don't Neglect Workplace Culture

- Create a "virtual water cooler" to share information and reinforce social bonds
- For managers, don't forget the power of emotional contagion and how you can help employees react to sudden changes or crisis situations

From Harvard Business Review: [Making Virtual Teams Work: Ten Basic Principles](#); [How to Collaborate Effectively If Your Team is Remote](#); and [A Guide to Managing Your Newly Remote Workers](#)

Learn New Skills

- Give yourself more time to get things done, and budget time to seek out help for any technical issues
- If you have been wanting to brush up on skills or learn new ones, this is the time

More Resources for Remote Work

“The Do's and Don'ts of Working from Home.” Nuun, <http://nuunlife.com/blogs/news/the-do-s-and-don-ts-of-working-from-home>.

Shutterfly. “Top 12 Tips When Working from Home: Ideas and Inspiration for Every Occasion.” Shutterfly, 20 Mar. 2020, www.shutterfly.com/ideas/top-12-tips-when-working-from-home/.

Aten, Jason. “These 5 Tech Companies Are Providing Free Remote Working Tools During the Coronavirus Outbreak.” *Inc.com, Inc.*, 5 Mar. 2020, www.inc.com/jason-aten/these-5-tech-companies-are-providing-free-remote-working-tools-during-coronavirus-outbreak.html.

Neeley, Tsedal. “15 Questions About Remote Work, Answered.” *Harvard Business Review*, 23 Mar. 2020, http://hbr.org/2020/03/15-questions-about-remote-work-answered?referral=03758&cm_vc=rr_item_page_top_right.

Herbst, Julia. “I Asked Experts to Analyze My To-Do Lists. This Is What They Found.” *Fast Company*, Fast Company, 27 Feb. 2020, www.fastcompany.com/90468058/i-asked-experts-to-analyze-my-to-do-lists-this-is-what-they-found.

Thompson, Avni Patel. “A Guide for Working (From Home) Parents.” *Harvard Business Review*, 20 Mar. 2020, www.hbr.org/2020/03/a-guide-for-working-from-home-parents.

Earley, Brigitt. “Working From Home? Studies Say House Plants May Help Your Productivity.” *Oprah Magazine*, Oprah Magazine, 16 Mar. 2020, www.oprahmag.com/life/work-money/g31617024/tips-for-working-from-home?utm_source=facebook_arb&utm_medium=cpm&utm_campaign=arb_fb_opr_m_am_g31617024.

Pollak, Lindsey, and Eileen Coombes. “23 Essential Tips for Working Remotely.” *Inc.com, Inc.*, 17 Mar. 2020, www.inc.com/lindsey-pollak-eileen-coombes/remote-work-home-productivity-communication-self-care-morale-team.html.

Raphael Bick is a partner in McKinsey & Company’s Shanghai office. “A Blueprint for Remote Working: Lessons from China.” *McKinsey & Company*, www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/mckinsey-digital/our-insights/a-blueprint-for-remote-working-lessons-from-china.

Dishman, Lydia. “How to Lead in Times of Crisis.” *Fast Company*, Fast Company, 14 Mar. 2020, https://www.fastcompany.com/90477071/how-to-lead-in-times-of-crisis?partner=rss&utm_source=rss&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=rss%2Bfastcompany&utm_content=rss%3Fcid

Larson, Barbara Z., and Erin E. Makarius. “The Virtual Work Skills You Need - Even If You Never Work Remotely.” *Harvard Business Review*, 27 Nov. 2018, www.hbr.org/2018/10/the-virtual-work-skills-you-need-even-if-you-never-work-remotely

Lavenda, David. “Tips for Transitioning an Office-Based Company to Remote Work.” *Fast Company*, Fast Company, 1 Apr. 2013, www.fastcompany.com/3007638/tips-transitioning-office-based-company-remote-work.