

Staying Happy and Healthy While Working from Home

More people than ever work from home at least part of the time. While working remotely has many advantages, adjusting to the arrangement takes time and can sometimes pose challenges for even the most seasoned teleworkers. It's common to feel disorganized and disconnected at times, but there are some simple, practical ways to strike a balance, find your groove, and enjoy the unique benefits of working from home.

Let's first review some of the advantages and potential challenges of teleworking:

Benefits

- Reduced stress and anxiety levels
- Improved quality of life
- Better work/life balance
- Less time and money spent on commuting
- More time spent at home with family
- Fewer coworker disruptions and feeling obligated to socialize
- Increased productivity
- More autonomy
- Added flexibility for everyday tasks
- More appealing/comfortable workspace
- Greater ability to make healthier food choices

Drawbacks

- Increased loneliness/isolation
- Fewer opportunities for impromptu collaboration and problem-solving with colleagues
- Less daily structure
- Added pressure to be available
- Higher susceptibility to procrastination
- Video call fatigue
- More interruptions from family members
- Reduced presenteeism
- Lack of equipment needed to perform tasks
- Difficulty staying focused

7 Telework tips for finding balance, staying organized, and maintaining connection

1. **Stick to a schedule:** Treat your work-at-home days as though you're at the office. Arrive and leave at set times, eat lunch (away from your desk), and take regular breaks.
2. **Cultivate comfort:** One of the most satisfying aspects of working from home is being in control of the temperature, lighting, and furnishings. So, turn on the heat, give yourself that office with a window that you've always wanted, and set up a pleasing workspace that looks and functions just the way you want.
3. **Get dressed for work:** Some remote workers find it helpful to get up and start their day just as they would if they were headed into the office, including putting on work attire or doing their hair and makeup.
4. **Stay on speaking terms:** With everyone in different locations, it's easy to fall into the habit of communicating only by email and instant message. Pick up the phone or conduct a check-in with a video call whenever possible to mix things up and maintain more personal connections.
5. **Set boundaries:** It's essential to set boundaries to prevent distractions and the pressure to work outside of normal hours. This might mean physically separating your home office from the rest of your home, establishing rules for your children, or setting expectations with your boss and coworkers around your availability.
6. **Take time off:** The convenience of working from home can sometimes make it all too easy to take your work with you wherever you go. It's important to use your leave time and leave your work behind so you can rest and recharge.
7. **Mind your mental health:** Stay in tune with how you're feeling and take care of yourself. If stress and burnout start to creep in, you feel isolated, or can't quite stay motivated, try engaging in self-care practices, talk with a friend or coworker, or reach out to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for support.