

ADVICE ON HOME WORKING



Plan your day

If you are not used to working from home you need to have a clear schedule for the day ahead. When you physically go into your normal work space, the day is very much scheduled for you already, but when you are at home you have to do this yourself. However, make your schedule as flexible as possible. For instance, it might be that due to childcare duties you might have to do some of your work in the evening once the kids are in bed. This is fine, as long as you plan this in advance and tell your family what you are doing.

Set ground rules

Working without interruption is crucial. Set ground rules with your family about where and when you are planning to work. This is an unprecedented crisis, so get the family around the table and talk about the rules. If you have children tell them you are working from home and also tell them why, but also be careful not to unduly scare them. Life is going to change for all of us, so let's plan ahead.

Find a suitable space

Finding an appropriate space in which to work in the house is critical. If you are not used to working from home you might have to create a space especially, for instance maybe in a dining room or a child's bedroom. You need to give this serious thought, and again family consultation is really important. As a family get together and say 'let's see if we can organise ourselves effectively'.

Take exercise

When you are going to work in an office you might walk to the train station or bus stop, but when you are at home this discipline disappears which is why you must make time in your day for exercise, especially at lunchtime. It comes back to scheduling. Get out of the house, go for a walk, get some fresh air.



Maintain social contacts

Social media can come into its own during this crisis. Whether it's using FaceTime, Skype or WhatsApp, ensure face to face contact continues with colleagues, family and friends. One of the reasons that many people do not apply for home working is the fear that it will be a lonely process, but it needn't be. Eyeball to eyeball remains really important. We have the technology available to us, let's use it.

Email not always the answer

The temptation when working from home is to only communicate by email rather than picking up the phone or having a video call with a colleague. The worry is that you start using email when actually it would be far better, and wiser, to have a conversation, especially if it concerns a sensitive subject. Rather than dealing with a problematic email simply by replying, say to them 'can we talk about this' and speak to them face to face over video.

Get dressed

Smart casual is fine, pyjamas definitely not. Think about all those video calls you are going to start having. Look smart but wear something that you feel comfortable in. There is no need to go over the top.