

# Working from home best practices

Almost overnight, working from home has become the new norm. At Wood, we are taking the appropriate advice and encouraging employees to work from home where necessary to prioritize their health and safety, and that of their wider communities, amid COVID-19. Working from home may be completely new to you and will take some adjustment, we are all adapting to new ways of working and communicating.

**If you or your team need to work from home, here are our top tips for getting started.**

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**Tip 1:**

## Prepare your workspace



Make sure that you dedicate a space to work. A room that you can dedicate as your office is ideal if possible, if not a small desk or kitchen table will be the next best option. All equipment used must be in good working condition and your chair should allow you to achieve a comfortable seating position. Having a dedicated, comfortable space to work in is crucial for your state of mind, not just your "working" mindset but also so you're able to turn off when the working day is over.

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**Tip 3:**

## Ramp up your communication



You will no longer have the option of talking to people across the room or to have a coffee with your colleagues, so make sure to allocate time to catch up with your team mates collectively and individually. Figure out how much interaction you need to feel connected and use the tools available to help, video calls, instant messaging and collaboration programs. And with so much communication happening digitally, social cues are harder to read so empathy is more important than ever.

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**Tip 2:**

## Start and end your day with a routine



Deciding you'll sit down at your desk and start work at a certain time is one thing. But what in your morning routine defines the start of work? When working from home, do all the things you'd do to prepare to head to the office: if you would usually set your alarm, make coffee, start with some exercise, and get dressed – keep doing that. In the same way, end your day with a routine, check in with your key contacts to sign off and clear out your emails to signal the end of the day.

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**Tip 4:**

## Set your intentions



Set a schedule and stick to it as much as you can. Begin every day by identifying what you need to do, how you intend to do it, and pace yourself. Nobody sprints through their work the entire day -- your motivation will ebb and flow. Capitalize on your most productive periods, save your harder tasks for when you know you'll be in the right headspace and use slower points of the day to knock out the easier tasks.

Tip 5:

## Understand the expectations



Stay in touch with your manager and team regularly, to not only keep up to date with any new tasks, but also to provide support to each other when working through these exceptional circumstances. You should be clear about how performance expectations will differ from a typical day, whether because processes have changed through necessity or because priorities are continually moving.

Tip 8:

## If you have kids, prepare for disruptions



Overnight, a lot of parents now have three full-time jobs: parent, teacher, and the job they are paid to do. Do not feel overwhelmed by this, it's not impossible if you plan ahead and have some flexibility. If you co-parent, take turns between watching the kids and mix up your hours, if your job allows. Try new activities and remember learning doesn't always mean conventional schoolwork, now is the time to embrace the educational value of technology. We are creating content to keep kids engaged at home, check our social channels every Tuesday for new activities.

Tip 6:

## Take breaks



Don't short-change yourself during breaks, set an alarm or a reminder in your calendar to take them. And make sure you take the appropriate length of break, if need be launching a timer when you take a break. If you return to your desk too early, walk away. Also avoid working when you would be commuting and remember to eat properly – just as you would in the office, plan what you are going to eat throughout the day.

Tip 9:

## Fight the urge to multitask



This may seem like a convenient time to catch up on chores around the house, but it's easier than you'd expect to get distracted. If you prepare meals ahead of time for the office, do the same at home so you don't get preoccupied in the kitchen. Chances are you don't watch TV at work either, so try not to leave it on, even if it's just background noise. Instead listen to music that matches the energy of the project you're working on.

Tip 7:

## Practice self-care



In times of self-isolation, it's easy to question the meaning of being productive and happy. Dedicate time each day for exercise, meditation or maybe it's enough just to take breaks. Open your windows to let in as much natural daylight and fresh air and take your exercise outside if you can – and be sure to wash your hands as soon as you return home. Prioritise your health when working from home, especially when it is easy to blur the work and non-work boundaries.

Tip 10:

## Stay safe online



Be very careful which websites you visit and trust with your information, use the safest device available and set strong passwords. If you're not sure about something, contact your IT department or technical support team. Now more than ever, we all need to be alert. Scammers are on the increase, some are pretending to be from trusted organisations, trying to get sensitive information, and sometimes payment, from their targets.

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