

Best Practice for Working from Home



Introduction

With more and more companies adopting a location-independent workforce, the rate of home working has skyrocketed. In fact, the number of people working from home in the US has jumped by 115% in the past decade alone.

That means thousands more of us have the potential to enjoy the benefits of working from home, including a better work-life balance, increased efficiency (yes, really), and virtual meetings conducted in the comfort of our slippers. But despite what some people might have you believe, working from home isn't all leisurely lunches and superproductive work days. Well, not without a bit of planning anyway. That's why it's vital to have a game plan. From setting up a dedicated workspace to making foolproof to-do lists, there are plenty of things you can do to guarantee success while working from home. Here's our guide to the most important ones.

Whats inside

- 01 Establish in a dedicated workspace
- 02 Make sure you can access all your files and projects from anywhere
- 03 Make a schedule and stick to it
- 04 Schedule your to-do lists
- 05 Maintain strong relationships - use video
- 06 Avoid distractions
- 07 Relight that creative spark
- 08 Never work on an empty stomach
- 09 Setting up a work from home policy

01 Establish a dedicated workspace

If you're not careful, working from home can be full of temptations, and typing emails from the couch is one of them. Yet however tempting it is to shun your desk in favor of a comfy spot, sacrificing a dedicated work space can have a huge effect on your motivation and working mindset. For peak productivity, it's important to have a comfortable working area with everything you need for the job at hand. Below are a few tips to make that happen.

Invest in a desk

You might have convinced yourself that your kitchen table will do, but for optimum productivity, only a desk will do. Just make sure you don't forget about comfort. You're going to spend a lot of your day here, so make sure it offers plenty of breathing space. To create healthy work routine when at home, it really helps to build a place your brain recognizes as somewhere work gets done

Don't skimp on the chair

Picking a desk chair is like choosing a mattress. It's not a decision to be taken lightly. For a chair that's going to support you for years to come, look for one that is fully adjustable and ergonomic

Prioritize natural light

Having a desk by a window doesn't just give you a nice view; it ensures you get plenty of natural light. It might not sound too important, but exposure to natural light has been linked to better workplace performance, as well as improved sleep and mood. Time to fling open those curtains!

Buy a lamp

With natural light comes natural darkness, making a desk lamp an essential part of your home office kit. Pick a bulb that offers enough brightness to see you through to the end of the work day, without being too glaring. After all, creating an attractive office ambience is a great way to keep you interested in your workspace.

Make it personal

Just as you might have personal photos, plants, or supplies on your office desk, consider these personal touches at home, too. Again, it's all about creating a space where you feel comfortable and productive.

02 Ensure access to all files & projects from anywhere

Working from home means you can't blame old technology or errant co-workers for any lost data. Instead, the responsibility for missing documents or corrupted files lies directly with you. Gulp! And to be as efficient as you would be at the office, you should be able to access all your important documents, tools and projects just as easily at home as you would be at your regular desk.

One smart way to keep your data safe is to use of the cloud. Here are just some of the things it can help you with.

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.

Makes collaboration a breeze

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 Google Drive and Dropbox are great for this type of work. They're quick, easy to navigate, and largely free to use.

Tip

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.



03 Make a schedule and stick to it

Planning is the key to success when working from home. From creating a weekly list of objectives to ticking off your daily to-do list, there's no such thing as too much structure when it comes to getting things done as a telecommuter.

Create a weekly schedule on Monday morning
As well as helping you stay on track with deadlines and meetings, a weekly schedule can help you plan tasks around your work environment. Niti Shah, Senior Marketing Manager at Hubspot suggests, "Plan out your week in advance to optimize for the environments you'll be in." So if you're commuting on Tuesday morning, schedule some easy jobs to tick off on the train. Or if you're spending a day in the office, plan to tackle some of the more collaborative tasks.

Make daily to-do lists

It might seem obvious, but to-do lists really can help you get things done. And not just because you feel guilty at not ticking off any tasks. According to a recent study by professors at Baumeister and Masicampo from Wake Forest University, simply making a plan to complete pressing tasks can free us from the anxiety that surrounds them. As a result, we're more likely to actually complete them. So what's the best way to make a to-do list? There are plenty of options. For a list that you can share with others and update through the day, give project management tools like Trello or Active Collab a try. These platforms let you assign jobs to other people and prioritize tasks. Or why not try an app? Wunderlist, Google Keep, and To-doist all help you keep on top of your to-do list, even

04 Schedule your to-do lists

So you've scribbled down your to-do list for the day - now what? Before you jump straight into it, take time to schedule each job in your calendar.

This ensures you have realistic expectations for the day's work, while also pushing you to be as productive as possible.

To ensure stress-free scheduling, here are some top tips:

Be realistic

When scheduling work, be realistic about how long it'll take you. Remember that not everything will go as planned - you might need to ask a question about the work, an urgent email might land in your inbox, or the doorbell might ring at just the wrong moment. So always schedule more time to account for these unexpected interruptions, and be prepared to jump straight back into work after your holdup.

Use an online calendar

Online calendars are great for scheduling daily tasks. A couple of the best include Google Calendar and Apple's iCloud Calendar. Both offer great integration for all devices, allowing you to add, edit and delete tasks or events from your mobile device, wherever you are.

05 Maintain strong relationships by using video

Meetings pose one of the biggest challenges to those who work from home. With many telecommuters living too far away from their office to regularly travel to meetings, it's easy to feel disconnected from the rest of the office. That's why videoconferencing is so important to remote teams. With the ability to connect people, boost collaboration, and spark creativity, video meetings are a home worker's best friend.

Talk face-to-face with your team

In business, face-to-face meetings are hard to beat. Not only do they make it easier to share ideas, but they've been shown to build trust. With videoconferencing, speaking face-to-face is easy. With HD video and great sound quality, a video meeting is just like being in your office conference room. Even when you're at your desk at home.

Boost collaboration

Collaboration can take a hit when you're working from home, but videoconferencing can help. Being able to speak to your team in real-time, and even share your screen with them, makes it easy to collaborate on projects, give feedback, and ask those all too common urgent questions

06 Avoid distractions

Easier said than done, right? Distractions might zap your productivity, but when you're in the comfort of your own home, it can seem impossible to ignore them. To give yourself the best chance of success, try your best to stick to the schedule we talked about earlier. Having a realistic timetable that allows for the odd interruption will help keep you focused on your to-do list.

Still tempted to do the laundry or walk the dog? Then schedule these activities during your lunch hour; just don't forget to set a timer telling you when you should be back at your desk. And always remember: the sooner you tick off your to-do list, the sooner you can clock off for the day.

Use an app to track your progress

The pomodoro technique is one great way to stay productive, and there are a number of apps to help you implement this. By breaking tasks into a series of shorter periods of work punctuated by regular breaks, you can be more productive and stay focused. One of our favourite Pomodoro timer apps is BeFocused (MacOS/iOS). It is great for giving feedback, and asking those all too common urgent questions.

07 Relight that creative spark



For some people, working in their own homes helps them come up with their best ideas. For others, the lack of social interaction drains them of their creativity. If you fall into the latter camp, consider connecting with your team via videoconferencing. Even if it's just for a 10-minute chat while you're sipping your morning coffee, throwing around ideas with your team can help spark your creativity.

08 Never work on an empty stomach

Yes, feel smug you that don't have to endure the morning commute. Go ahead. We'll wait. But to make the most of your morning and start the day right, always eat breakfast first before opening your inbox. Don't make the rookie mistake to check your emails before doing anything else. Big. Mistake. Always get breakfast first before opening your inbox. Otherwise, you'll soon get sucked down a black hole of emails and "quick" tasks that never quite seem to stop, fueled only by coffee...

Before you know it, it's several hours later and your blood sugar levels have crashed, your mind is weak and you're shaking from the caffeine overload you ingested on an empty stomach.

Setting up a work from home policy

For team leaders, working from home offers a whole host of benefits. But it also presents some challenges too. Namely, making sure that everyone is happy, productive, and working to their full potential.

To make sure everything runs smoothly, it's always a good idea to establish a company policy on working from home. This document should outline the do's and don'ts of remote working to ensure your team know what's expected of them.

Of course, there's no one-size-fits-all work from home policy. Yours will largely depend on the values of the brand and the services you offer. However, there are some details that every good policy should contain.

These include

- Information on who can work from home and when
- The procedure for how to request remote working options
- Expectations for working hours, meeting attendance, etc.
- How to deal with any time zone differences

Working from home can have a big impact on the happiness, productivity, and creative output of your whole team. But for everything to run smoothly, communication is key. So make sure that you combine clear work from home policies with real-time support for all your remote team. Now, get back to work!

Want to learn more about video conferencing
and how it can make your life easier?

Get in touch at kinly.com