

Top tips for working remotely

The current crisis has businesses urging, and in many cases mandating, that employees work from home. If you're new to working remotely 100% of the time, this could be a significant adjustment. You may not have been prepared to turn your living space into your workspace for the foreseeable future.

Here are our top tips for working remotely that will make your experience less stressful and more productive:



Designate a workspace



It is easier to stay mentally focused if you designate a specific area in your home to get work done. That could be a home office, spare bedroom, or some other dedicated area that offers privacy. If you can find a spot that provides a lot of natural light, even better. Also, if you will be making video calls while working remotely, make sure you have a background that you won't mind having others see.

Make it comfortable!

Make sure you have the right equipment at home so you can be efficient and productive. This includes things like a computer / laptop and high-speed internet connection that can support video conferencing, a desk / table to sit at, it's important to remember that your eye level should be at the top of the screen.

Set boundaries

Now more than ever, it's essential to set boundaries when working remotely. If you live with other people, make sure it's clear when you can't be disturbed - especially while on important video calls. Set your own boundaries too - have a schedule, and stick to it... most of the time. Having clear guidelines for when to work and when to call it a day helps many remote workers maintain work-life balance.

Overcommunicate

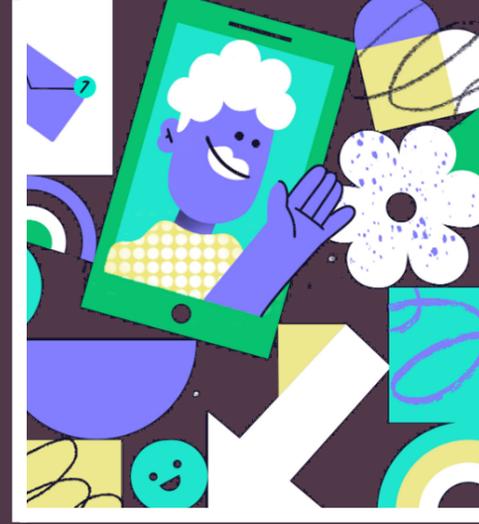
Because you are not in an office where people can see you, communication is more critical when working remotely. Communicate frequently with your manager and know what's expected of you.

Be sure to speak up during meetings so everyone knows you're on the call - as you can't be seen, it's even more important to ensure your presence known. Tell everyone who needs to know about your schedule and availability. When you finish a project or important task, say so.

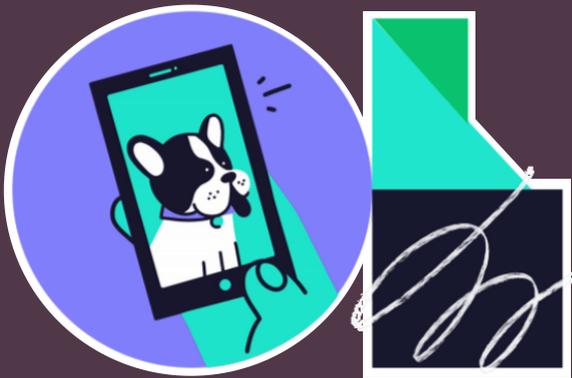


Stay connected with colleagues

Online tools like Microsoft Teams and Slack not only help workflow but can also serve as social outlets. It's even better to speak to another human being, so make some phone calls to check in with people. Video calls add another sensory element to your interactions. Experts say video conferencing while working from home helps fight isolation while enhancing team unity and productivity.



Take breaks!



Working remotely is inherently challenging because it's easy to lose track of time. With the current situation, taking breaks is even more critical. That's because, in a traditional office, it's easy to stop by a co-worker's desk to chat or head to the break room for a cup of coffee.

In one survey, nearly 90% of workers said that taking a lunch break helped them feel refreshed and ready to get back to work. So, pull yourself away from the computer, even if it's for a few minutes.

Focus on the big picture

This is a stressful time for everyone, so it's important to remember not to be too hard on yourself and to be kind to others. You may feel bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also be low, worried or anxious, or concerned about your finances, your health or those close to you. It's important to remember that it is okay to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently. <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/> and <https://www.mind.org.uk/> has some great resources to help support you.

Managing a team

The coronavirus situation has turned all of our worlds upside down and you are in the front line of helping your direct reports get through it but that can also take its toll on you too. Increase how often you are checking in with your reports. Start by asking them how they are and what is going on with them. Don't be afraid to share your own vulnerabilities as this shows you care and will encourage them to open up to you.



Know where your resources are

We're conscious that, with information changing so rapidly, not everyone can stay up-to-date whilst still doing their day job. So we've created a [hub where contractors and candidates](#) can go to track down the latest help and advice to support them. We'll be updating the content as often as we can to keep it as useful as possible.

If we can be of any further support, don't hesitate to contact us: ContractorCare@outsorce-uk.co.uk