

TIPS FOR WORKING REMOTELY

HOW TO BE PRODUCTIVE WHEN YOU ARE WORKING FROM HOME

Apex Advice | Apex Insurance

The first consideration for Apex is to look after staff, contain COVID-19 and protect public health. As the situation evolves, there may be instances where working from home is mandatory. Here are some tips to keep in mind when working remotely.

Maintain regular hours

Stick to your usual work routine as much as possible. Having clear guidelines for when to work and when to call it a day helps many remote workers maintain work-life balance.

Create a morning routine

Deciding you'll sit down at your desk and start work at a certain time is one thing. Creating a routine that guides you into the chair is another. What in your morning routine defines the start of work? It might



be making a cup of coffee. It might be returning home from a jog. It might be getting dressed (wearing pajama pants to work is a perk for some, but a bad strategy for others). Create a morning routine that ends with you starting work.

Set ground rules with the people in your space

Set ground rules with other people in your home or who share your space for when you work. If you have children who come home from school while you're still working, they need clear rules about what they can and cannot do during that time. Additionally, just because you're home and can let service people into the house or take care of pets doesn't mean other family members should assume you will always do it. If that's how you choose to divide up the domestic labour, that's fine, but if you simply take it all on by default, your productivity may suffer.

Schedule breaks

Take your breaks (lunch/tea breaks) as per normal. Give yourself adequate time during the day to walk away from the computer screen and phone. Despite working from home there is the requirement to work normal work hours and if your role is one that requires someone to be available then you will need to work with your manager to identify the appropriate break times. This will provide continuity, for example if you are in the existing business team where someone is required to answer the phone during work hours.

Looking at the map for some weekend travel ideas



Take breaks in their entirety

Don't short-change yourself during breaks, especially your lunch break. Launch a simple clock or timer on the screen when you take a break. If you return to your desk after only 40 minutes, walk away for another 20.

Get up from your seat

You may not be able to leave home but getting up and changing your environment at least once in the day is important. Your body needs to move, even if you are only walking to the backyard or balcony. The fresh air and natural light will do you good.

Experts recommend keeping your daily rituals even while working from home



Don't hesitate to ask for what you need

Make sure you have all the equipment you need to do your work at home. Request for the equipment you need from your manager as soon as you start working from home, or within a day or two when you realise you need something to be able to complete your role.

Keep a dedicated office space

In an ideal world, remote employees would have a dedicated office. If you do not have this ability in your home then find the quietest space possible so you can work with minimum interruptions.

Interact with colleagues

Loneliness, disconnect, and isolation are common problems in remote work life, especially for extroverts. It's important to figure out how much interaction you need to feel connected and included. Even if you're highly introverted and don't like socialising, give a few interactive experiences a try so that you're familiar with them if you ever decide you want them. For Apex Advice employees, you can use 8x8 to call or send instant messages to your colleagues. 8x8 also offers a "Meeting Room" function where you can video call colleagues and share screens if needed. [Instructions here](#). Zoom or Microsoft Teams are a good alternative if you don't have 8x8.



"Show up" to meetings and be heard

Certainly, you'll take part in video conferences and conference calls, but it's a good idea to attend optional meetings sometimes too. Be sure to speak up during the meeting so everyone knows you're on the call. A simple, "Thanks, everyone. Bye!" at the close of a meeting will go a long way toward making your presence known.



Take sick days

When you're ill, take the sick time you need. Not taking them when you need them is like throwing away money. You will find that you're more productive in the long run if you let your body rest when it's unwell. If sick leave is not available, other forms of paid and unpaid leave can be used by agreement – talk to your manager.



Overcommunicate

Working remotely requires you to overcommunicate. Tell everyone who needs to know about your schedule and availability often. When you finish a project or important task, say so. Overcommunicating doesn't necessarily mean you have to write a five-paragraph essay to explain your every move, but it does mean repeating yourself to keep everyone in the loop.

Be positive

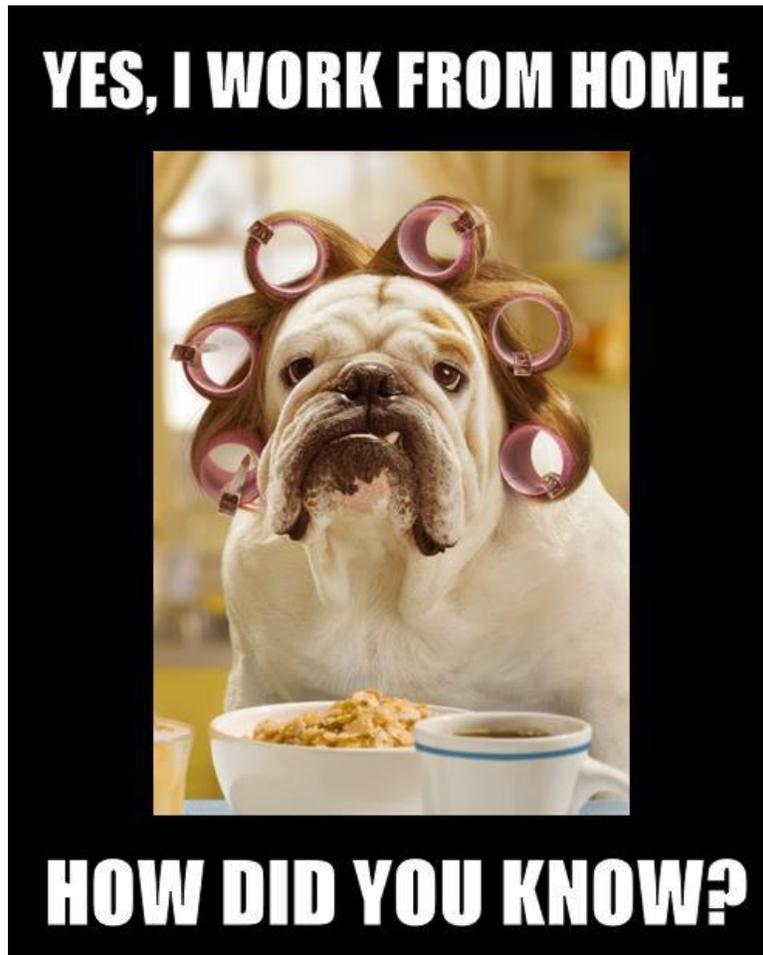
Some people like succinct and clear messages, but the less face time you have with people, the less they know how to interpret your tone. When working remotely, you must be positive. Otherwise, you risk sounding like a jerk. It's unfortunate, but true. So embrace the exclamation point! Find your favourite emoji :D. You're going to need them.

Don't be too hard on yourself

The most successful remote employees have a reputation for being extremely disciplined. After all, it takes serious focus to get a full-time office job done from an unconventional space. However, don't be too hard on yourself. Take a minute if things get too overwhelming at home. In the office, we walk away

from our desk sometimes – either to find inspiration or to take a break. Working from home comes with its own unique perks, see point below.

Take advantage of your perks



End your day with a routine

Just as you should start your day with a routine, create a habit that signals the close of the workday. It might be a sign off on emails, an evening dog walk, or an online yoga class. You might have a simple routine such as shutting down your computer and turning on a favourite podcast. Whatever you choose, do it consistently to mark the end of working hours.

Make it personal

Above all else, figure out what works best for you. Sometimes the answer is apparent, but other times you might need some inspiration from other people who are in the same boat. A supportive community of remote employees does exist, whether you find them in your colleagues or online through blogs.



WORKING FROM HOME



What my friends think I do



What my clients think I do



What the government thinks I do



What my mom thinks I do



What I think I do



What I really I do

