A GUIDE TO WORKING FROM HOME DURING COVID 19

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WORKING FROM HOME

Although working from home may be the norm for some of us, for others this may be very different to our normal working days. For a little while, it might feel a bit strange and you may be wondering how you will manage at home. However, give yourself some time to adjust to the changes and know that there are things that you can do to **maximise your well-being** whilst working at home.

This booklet is full of hopefully useful and practical tips that you can implement whilst you create a home office for yourself. You'll also find some **links** to extra resources at the back of this booklet that you can use for further support should you need it.

So **welcome home,** for now, and I hope you find the following helpful to create a positive working environment.

ENVIRONMENT

Creating a good environment to work in at home can help with how we feel and the work that we do.

If you can, try to create a **nice, clean, comfortable space** to work in, with a good chair that helps your posture. See if you can make your computer or laptop be at eye level too as so to avoid strain on your neck.

Open the windows to make sure you circulate the room with fresh air to keep yourself alert and healthy.

When you take breaks or lunch, try to move away from that 'work space' to create a sense of keeping your work and home life separate.

At the end of the day, **close the computer** and put it away, along with any paper work to signify the end of the day.

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KEEP A ROUTINE!

Keeping a regular routine whilst working at home can help normalise things, even if **just by a little bit.** Here are some top tips to keep a good routine whilst at home:

Keep wake up & sleep times the same.

Doing this helps put our natural body clock into a good rhythm and can help us with productivity.

Remember to take regular breaks

Get up, have a little walk around or make a cup of tea. If you struggle to do this, set yourself a reminder!

Don't forget lunch!

It can be easy to forget to switch off and have a lunch break when working from home. Try to turn the computer off and sit in a different place or room to enjoy your lunch break at home.

Log off at the end of the day

When your day is done, log off and switch off. Perhaps do something to signify the end of the day like having a shower, changing clothes or walking around the block. Close the computer or put the laptop away.

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TRY SCHEDULING

Scheduling your day can be a really helpful way to be productive (and boundaried) in work, and also make sure you include some fun, healthy or relaxing activities throughout your day. The below is just a short example - give it a go with your day and see if you can include a good balance of activities throughout your day of things you **have** to do, **need** to do and **enjoy** doing.

As well as our sleep and wake up times, keeping set meal times every day can really help to create routine and a **sense of regularity**.

Example...

7:00	→	Breakfast
8:00	→	Go for a (socially distant!) walk
9:00	→	Work on project #1
11:00	→	10 minute tea break
13:00	→	Lunch over Zoom with colleagues
15:00	→	10 min stretch break
17:00	→	Log off for the day
18:00	→	Do something fun
19:00	→	Dinner

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GET WASHED & DRESSED

Although it would seem lovely to be in our PJs all day, its not as fun as it sounds! **Help boost your mood** by taking a shower and getting dressed in the morning for the day at work. When the day is over, those PJs will feel much better to jump into!

MOVE

Keep active! Take little walks around the garden, the house or even up and down the stairs! Make sure to get out for your once a day form of exercise if you can. Take a run or walk and enjoy the natural light and surroundings. Or find an **online workout** or class you can do before or after work to get moving.

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STRETCH

Sitting down all day can cause certain muscles in our bodies to get tight, which can lead to aches and pains. **Stretching** these muscles helps to keep our muscles and joints well and helps prevent pain. It also helps to bring blood flow to these areas, which they can lack when we are seated too long.

The neck, the hips the shoulders are some of the main parts of our bodies which suffer when we spend too long sitting down.

Regular 5 minute stretch breaks can really help the body and the mind. See if you can schedule some of these across your working day. Yoga can also be a great way to stretch and open the body as well as relieve stress. Try scheduling in an online class or video before or after work. It's a great way to start or end a working day.

Check out some **links** at the end of this booklet for suggested stretches and online videos.

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CONNECT WITH COLLEAGUES

If you're used to being around a lot of colleagues in the office, it can feel a little bit lonely or different when first working from home.

It could be easy to go the whole day without speaking to your colleagues if you're busy getting on with your work. However, it's really important to speak to another human now and again!

See if you can schedule some time to connect with colleagues. Not just over email, but through the phone or through video. There are great platforms such as **GoToMeetings**, **Zoom** and **Google Hangouts** that allow you to see your colleagues and have a catch up. Why not share lunch over a video chat?

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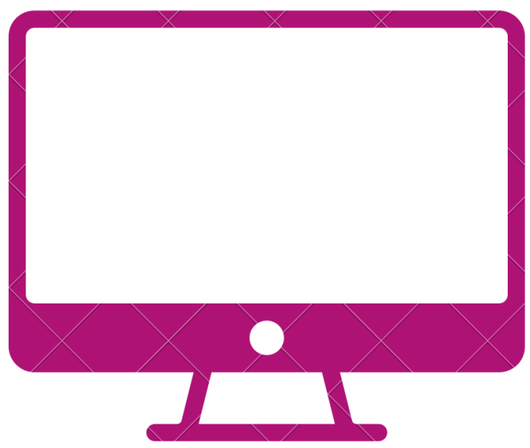
GO SCREEN-FREE

If we're working from home, we're most likely going to be spending most of our time in front of a screen all day. Although this may be impossible to avoid, there are things we can do do **help** with our eye strain and exposure to the blue light that comes from screens.

Try setting one hour aside in the evening to go **screen free.** Play a board game with other people in your house or try reading a book before bed. Swap scrolling through your phone first thing in the morning for a 30 minute stretch or a mindful coffee.

Also, taking regular 'eye breaks' from our computers can help with strain. Try the **20-20-20** rule: Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds.



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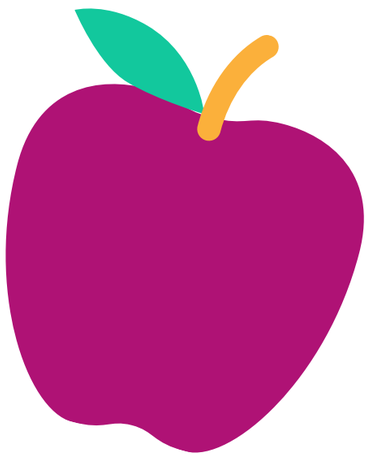
EAT GOOD

FEEL GOOD

Because we're closer to the fridge all day, it may be tempting to snack on lots of treats whilst we work! Keep yourself feeling good and avoid afternoon sugar crashes by snacking on some **healthy options**. Try greek yoghurt with nuts & seeds or dip some veggies into some hummus. Eating well can help boost our energy levels throughout the day, making us feel better in ourselves.

Watch out for too much **caffeine** too as it can make us a little over jittery throughout the day, as well as affect our sleep.

Our brain needs lots of **water** to be able to function properly, so make sure you drink lots of it whilst you work. Having a water bottle next to you or a little reminder on your computer can help you to remember to top up.



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SET HEALTHY LIMITS WITH THE NEWS

Okay, it's probably good for us to keep up to date with what is happening, but it's easy to fall into checking the news all to regularly.

Set **healthy limits** with yourself to check the news perhaps once or twice a day, and choose when you'll do this and how long you'll spend. **5-10 minutes** is normally enough to find out all you need to know. Any longer than this, and we can spiral down into a news-hole!

Try to stay away from checking the news first thing when you wake up, and definitely **don't** check it just before you go to sleep! This can cause our mind to get busy and it can be harder to get to sleep.

Try doing some **relaxation** before sleep, or put on a sleep meditation before you drift off to help you sleep better. You'll find some links to these on the **resource page.**

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WEEKENDS AND TIME OFF

Whilst we're spending some more time at home, it's important to divide our working week with our weekends or our time off.

At the weekend, make sure to put your work stuff away and focus on different things during this time.

Are there things that you have always wanted to **learn?** Can you do this in your time off? Our **resource** section has a list of websites and ideas of places where you can learn new things.

Are there **books** that you have been meaning to read but haven't had the time to? **Audible** and **Kindle** can also be great places to download new ones. Podcasts are another wonderful way to learn something new or laugh to.

Are there **projects** that need doing around the house? or deep cleaning? The extra time inside can be the perfect opportunity to get round to the things we've been putting off.

Finally, make sure to spend some of your weekends **connecting with others** in your home or **digitally**, and most importantly, having **FUN!** Schedule time in to watch funny movies or play games. It all helps.

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SUMMARY

Throughout this time, taking steps to making things as **supportive** as possible for ourselves can make working at home easier and more enjoyable. To summarise:

- Create an nice, clean environment for work
- Create a routine & try scheduling your day
- Move & stretch regularly
- Take regular breaks & don't forget lunch
- Connect with colleagues
- Eat well & stay hydrated
- Limit news exposure
- Separate weekends & time off

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RESOURCES

Exercise

Jo Wicks' (The Body Coach) YouTube Channel

NHS Fitness Studio

Nuffield Health's home workouts

Stretching & Yoga

Stretch break for office workers

Stretches at your desk

Yoga with Adrienne YouTube Channel

Yoga for uncertain times

Learn

TED talks

Future Learn - free courses

Udemy - certified courses

Languages

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Meditate & Sleep

Headspace

Insight Timer

Calm

Calm Sleep Stories | Stephen Fry's 'Blue Gold'

Yoga Nidra (relaxation) for sleep

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