



# WORKING REMOTELY

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Tips to make it work for you and your employer

The concept of remote working has been around for a long time. Many entrepreneurs have mastered the ability to work virtually, but it is often a major challenge for those who normally work in a busy office setting to shift to working outside their traditional office environment. Working remotely can feel more isolating than mingling with co-workers in an office setting.

Being effective while you work remotely takes more than a mindset shift. It requires a disciplined approach to planning your activities and seeking out opportunities to interact with your co-workers. Here are nine practical tips you can use to make the most of this experience.





## 1. Establish a Routine

Just as you have a routine in your normal workday, try to mimic this routine as you work in your remote location. Whether it is at your home, an airport or a coffee shop, following your normal work schedule is vital to feeling like you are really working. Start your workday at the same time. Make sure you get dressed. Wearing your pajamas might be comfortable, but it does not prepare your mindset for work. It can become easy to get distracted when you are working in a different environment, so focus on *acting* like you're still working in a supervised workplace. This approach will help you *feel* more like you are working.

## 2. Set up a Dedicated Workspace

Having an area in your home where you do your work is essential to success in working remotely. It is easy to become distracted by the dog, television or the pile of household tasks that need to be completed. When you are in your workspace, you are working. If you combine it with following your normal worktimes, you can do a better job of staying focused.

## 3. Convert Commute Time to Learning Time

The time you used to spend on your commute is now extra time that you can use to enhance your value by learning something new. With the plethora of online courses and videos, you can take advantage of this “commute time” to enhance your skills. Even better, you might be able to get a certificate of completion that will make you even more valuable when you get back to a normal office work routine.

## 4. Take a Lunch Break

One of the most challenging aspects about working remotely is that it becomes easy to just sit at your desk and eat your lunch. In a normal work environment, you have to walk somewhere and often wait a bit to get your food. At home, your lunch time could drop from an hour to 15 minutes. Use the extra time to get in your workout or engage in some other activity to benefit your health. Giving yourself a solid break during the day will help reinvigorate you and give you a mental boost.

## 5. Connect with Others

When you are feeling a little lonely or isolated, take a minute to reach out to someone. Rather than sending a lengthy email, see if a colleague is available to talk live about a project. If they are working remotely too, they might welcome the human contact! Intentional connections like this build team bonds and help sustain you when you are working remotely. It also offers you additional opportunities to dig even deeper into issues and brainstorm alternative solutions to critical issues.

## 6. Use Video Conferencing

Using technology applications such as video conferencing is a great way to connect people from different locations. It provides a deeper level of connection and engagement than a phone call or text. Don't worry about looking perfect on camera. The key here is using technology to connect with each other. Remote meetings are often very effective, but you need to make sure everyone is focused on the meeting and not multi-tasking! You can even set up regularly scheduled meetings via video conferencing so you can add more structure to your workday.

## 7. Communicate Clearly

If you are now relying on digital communication with your colleagues through email, be sure you are communicating effectively. Sarcasm or snarky comments have no place in written communication as they can be taken out of context without the body language or facial expressions to convey your meaning. Take some time to plan out the structure for your communication. Identify your key messages and what you need to add to support them. This will help you clarify your thinking and be better understood by others when they are only relying on your written communication.

## 8. Leverage Your Opportunities for Productivity

You will likely discover you are more productive without all of the interruptions common during an office workday. The lack of interruptions and distractions create additional opportunities for you to be more efficient in completing your normal work responsibilities. It also offers you the opportunity to be even more productive. Leverage this productivity and tackle that special project you were hoping to get done someday. That someday is now! Just make sure it is a one-off project, not a permanent addition to your job responsibilities.

## 9. Be Aware of the Time Trap

It is not uncommon for people to feel guilty that they are not working hard enough when working remotely. It is easy to fall into the time trap to seek out additional job responsibilities to fill your time. Keep in mind that you won't have the same opportunities for productivity once you go back to a normal office environment. You and your boss should be clear about this so the extra work does not cause complications when you get back into the work setting.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

While it is not ideal to have a major shift in how you work, you can adapt to the situation with practice and focus. Keep in mind that it takes time learning to balance all of the complex aspects of working remotely. Be creative in exploring all your options for maintaining a connection with those you work with. Just make sure you keep your mindset on making a remote situation work for you—and your employer. 🌟



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