

How To Be Productive
When **Working**
From Home

HEMMING & WILLS.

When you're trying to work remotely, you often wonder if the phrase 'working from home' is applicable due to the lack of work actually being done.

After posting a lovely picture of your working from home set-up, you might find yourself actually struggling to get to the 'working' part, particularly when you're being asked by one of your children if they can paint the family cat in all the colours of the rainbow to support the NHS.

Thankfully, there are a few pieces of advice that might help you hold on to the last three hairs on your head.

Here are some simple tips for maximising your productivity when working from home:

Remove Distractions

Your phone, your children, and your partner can all be contributing to a lack of productivity.

We recommend placing the noisiest distraction in the cupboard, especially small children, as they'll be able to fit perfectly into most household cupboards.

(Extra points if you lock the doors, too).

Another simple, but effective way to reduce the potential for distraction is to put your phone on 'Do Not Disturb' for a set period of time, setting aside a specific time of day to catch up on notifications.

For most employees, the biggest contributors to wandering minds are email notifications. Instead of waking up and immediately checking your emails, wait until mid-afternoon to check emails. That way, you're freeing up time to get the highest-priority task done to the best of your ability.

Plus, most emails are not of high importance, and you should remind yourself that if there is an urgent matter to attend to, most colleagues/employers will give you a call (which you will ignore instead).

Make Space

It doesn't have to be Pinterest-worthy. Being comfortable and far away from the places you usually relax in your downtime are key. Apps like Calm and Headspace are fantastic tools to get you in the zone.

Top tip? Use your ironing board as a standing desk! It's perfectly height-adjustable...

Contrary to what social media would portray, not many of us have solid oak desks and Harry Potter-esque bookcases.

Everyone's idea of the perfect workspace will be different, but one of the best things you can do for yourself is make sure you're not doing irreversible damage to your spine by sitting in a rickety chair all day.

It's all about trial and error. Some people love standing desks, others feel more productive when sitting down. It's best to alternate between standing and sitting, even if it's just to stretch - it's hard to concentrate on a task when you feel stiff and sore.

Setting up your workspace near a window with some good natural lighting can be a great boost to productivity, even if your next-door neighbours are outside doing PE with Joe Wicks.



*Use your ironing board
as a standing desk!*

*It's perfectly
height-adjustable...*

Get into a Routine

From mental breakdowns in front of your unimpressed cat to a morning cup of coffee, find a routine and stick to it.

Work in the hours that suit you best to maximise your output.

Move over, early bird, here comes the afternoon pigeon!

Many people swear by daylight lamps as the cure to their early mornings, whilst others insist exercise is the best way to start your day and keep your body and mind active.

You might find that going for a short walk before a dinner-break or taking the dog for a walk at the end of the day is the perfect addition to your routine as it prevents burnout.

Sometimes, it's less about the excessive benefits of the action and more about having a chance to add winding down into your schedule. We often neglect adding in breaks to our routine, even though they are one of the most important factors in staying productive.

Set Boundaries

Depending on your living situation, you may be attempting to work to your full potential with a full household clattering around you.

Structure your day as you would in the office, with small break times to socialise with family.

Now is probably the time to stick your working hours on your back along with FAQs for your family just to make certain you're not distracted.

Missing out on office water-cooler conversations? An ingenious way to replicate this at home is to small talk with those in your household in the kitchen when making yourself a hot drink.

Defining clear break times might seem a little excessive, but we all know that when we're in offices, one small conversation about how to correctly use a semi-colon quickly becomes a huge debate at the drop of a hat.

Making sure you've divided up domestic tasks between the people you're living with is also a good way to avoid an argument over who has to get up to let the dog back inside as well.

Video calls are far more stimulating than back-and-forth emails, and they give you a chance to socialise.

Stay Connected

If anyone understands why you're balding prematurely, it's your colleagues. A problem shared is a problem halved. Plus, it's good for accountability.

Video calls are far more stimulating than back-and-forth emails, and they give you a chance to socialise.

Having regular check-ins is also a great way to see if your colleagues have any effective ways to keep children entertained for longer than a millisecond!

Zoom, Slack and Skype are some available options for staying connected online.

Another way to stay connected in terms of workload is Trello, allowing you to create a virtual to-do list that can assign specific tasks and deadlines to each member of a team. This way, you can keep track of ongoing tasks AND be collaborative.

Nothing keeps you on-task quite like a deadline date in red with your name attached to it!

Do. Not. Multitask

Can you imagine your boss's face if you started mopping the floor of the office out of the blue?

Keeping to breaks for minimal tidying is best (let's not allow a twenty-minute break to become a two hour one).

There's a difference between tidying up and procrastinating by doing a top-to-bottom spring clean. Don't fall into the trap of trying to work and do household chores.

Productivity slumps when we try to divide our attention between tasks, but add in the distraction of things like TV, phone notifications and household clutter, and we're battling the urge to give up on work entirely.

The best way to avoid falling into this trap is to ask yourself whether you would be doing that in the office - chances are you wouldn't.

Planning your meals ahead of time might also help you avoid the 'tenth trip to the fridge' dilemma.

Accept the Inevitable

If you have children, they will find every way on planet Earth to distract you.

If you can't hide away in another room whilst your partner co-parents, giving your children time-consuming tasks is usually the best way to avoid being interrupted.

Chances are, even with the best planning, it'll happen anyway. You might as well laugh about it.

With the new flexibility of working from home, you may also find that adjusting your working hours might mean you manage to get a few solid hours of work in when your children are either sleeping, or pre-occupied. It isn't ideal to consistently change around your hours, so getting up a tad earlier might be the best option.

When in doubt, give your children a box full of Lego and hope for the best. With luck, they'll give you at least forty minutes before you're dragged into a meltdown!

Take Advantage of the Perks!

You wouldn't be able to bake banana bread in your office when on a break (*if you were, please let us know which office you're in for research purposes*).

More flexibility, having time for daily exercise and zero commuting are just some of the perks.

Savour the moments - even if the daily family walk you wouldn't have traditionally been able to go on digresses into a full-scale argument over how fast one family member is walking.

At home, you have a chance to make small changes that will hugely benefit you that you wouldn't have otherwise been able to do.

It's these small adjustments that make working from home so beneficial for a variety of people. When you cut out commuting times and plan your

schedule, you have time to fill with things that not only boost your mood, but also your productivity as a result.

Plenty of people are picking up new hobbies, healthier habits and enjoying the opportunity to spend more time than ever with those they live with.

(Don't worry, it's understandable if you're debating running away, though).

Working from home productively is all about making adjustments to suit your own personal needs.

The multitude of factors that affect our ability to stay on task will vary from person-to-person, but what is important is acknowledging that you can make changes that boost both productivity and wellbeing.

If locking yourself in the bathroom for half an hour to get that report done on time is what makes you feel better, do it!

Just don't make it a habit...

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