



# Working From Home Efficiently

By Dr. Linda Hancock

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

## Published

April 27th, 2020

Okay, I admit it. I do not transition very well. For years I have built my business providing face-to-face sessions in my office. Now, due to the COVID-19 I have had to mentally and physically operated my practice from my condo. It took a few days until I was psychologically ready to do this. Now, however, I have a system and am quite comfortable with the new ways of serving clients.

Here are some of the things for you consider so that you can successfully work from home:

1. Attitude - Being at home does not mean that you are on holidays. You need to give your employer a day's work for a day's pay and, if you are self-employed, to honour your business goals.
2. Schedule - Book your week for the same times you would if you were at the office. Your start and end times shouldn't be altered. You can still have meetings, telephone contact with clients and complete tasks even though you might need to have alternate ways of doing them. A forty-hour work week means forty hours of working.
3. Routine - Get up and groom yourself for the day. Set and follow a pattern that you can use repeatedly to stay in the work mode. The other day, I heard a journalist talk about her friend who has worked at home for years. Each morning, he dresses, leaves his house, and walks to a deli where he picks up a cup of coffee. He immediately walks home and as soon as he enters the door of his house, he knows he is at work! The daily walk helps him to psychologically transition. I set the alarm on my phone to remind me of the start and end times for breaks and lunch throughout the day and honour these times.
4. Setting - You need to set up private a place that is designated only for work and equipped to do your tasks. Years ago, a real estate agent told me that her work and domestic lives were inappropriately enmeshed until she had a door installed on one room in her house. The door separated the two parts of her life for her!
5. Distractions - Turn off the television! Make sure that family members know the importance of respecting the fact that you are working. Teach children that a "Do Not Disturb Sign" means that you are busy. Save personal conversations with friends until after your workday is over.
6. Adjustments - Ensure that you have all the "tools" you need to do your job. I don't see clients at my condo. My staff helped me to choose a secure software program so that I can do confidential therapy sessions with clients instead. We can see each other while we talk but can be miles apart at the same time
7. Focus - Businesses succeed when they make or sell products and services. Your thoughts, time and efforts need to always keep this in mind. Sitting in a hen house doesn't make you a chicken and just stating that you are working doesn't make you a successful employee or business owner. You need to continually contribute to transactions and the bottom line.
8. Timelines- If you have another physical office it is protected, insured and clean. You might be able to save some money while you are temporarily working from home (transportation, supplies, or even reduction in telephone/internet packages) but always keep in the mind that the office you will be returning to needs to be ready for you.
9. Preparation - Think about the adjustments that you can and will make in order to improve the business in the future. Temporarily working from home does not mean that you are in a "time out" where you just sit and wait for things to change. Take new ideas and refine them. Consider changes that you can make for efficiency. Think about the needs of your clients and how you can better fill them. Be creative. For example, I have been using the time that I would normally use travelling back and forth to my office to write an "Anxiety" handout for clients.

10. Hope - Life and business have both good and hard times. We all want to live on the mountaintop experiences, but the fruit actually grows in the valley! Learn to be content and give thanks no matter what is happening in the world! Mountaintop and valley.