# Productivity Techniques For Remote Working

You've been used to going into an office, now you're setting up shop in your home. Things have changed, and you need to change as well.

**Set realistic expectations**

While working from home may be new do not paint an unrealistic picture for yourself. It can lead to disappointment. The expectations of your role and deliverables remain consistent. You are still expected to deliver, so ensure your deliverables and goals are realistic.

**Be prepared for an adjustment period**

As you transition from a traditional work structure to home, there will be a period of adjustment. Be open to the challenges and celebrate the successes. You'll find that with time you are able to establish a routine that works for you.

It is critical that your team discusses, creates and sustains team norms that will support you, your colleagues and your leader. Access the "Team Norms" job-aid for more information.

**Fears and challenges**

During the adjustment period you may experience some concerns, frustrations and challenges, some real and some perceived. Some common ones are:

| Real or perceived fears and challenges about Work Styles |
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| ▪ Less opportunity for immediate feedback and recognition |
| ▪ Lack of spontaneity in your interactions with others |
| ▪ Feelings of isolation |
| ▪ Feeling that "out of sight, out of mind" will limit opportunities for development or promotions |
| ▪ Uncertainty on priorities and how to manage day-to-day work |
| ▪ Blurring of boundaries between personal and work time |

To be successful:

- Set realistic expectations;
- Don't be so hard on yourself as everyone is going through the change;
- Engage in open communication with your leader and team; and
- Focus on meeting and exceeding your objectives.

**Manage yourself, your time and your results**

Adopting to working from home will require you to become more self-directed in your approach to work tasks.

If you are able to work independently with minimal supervision and are used to taking initiative, you will have very few challenges adapting and motivating yourself. However, if this is new to you or you would like some additional support, consider the following.

**Time management is crucial to effective personal productivity**

Effective time management is critical to your success wherever you work. When you are working from your home, it's easy for the lines to blur between personal and work time/space.

Consider the following:

- How organized are you?
- Do you know how to prioritize?
- Do you procrastinate?

Thinking about your time management skills will make a significant difference in your ability to be successful while working from home.

**Limit distractions**

You can't always control your environment and when working from home you'll likely encounter distractions you hadn't planned for. Limit them as much as possible by:

- Having dedicated office space away from distractions;
- Setting time aside on breaks to tackle small personal tasks, to support you in achieving balance; and
- Reminding family (and pets!) that you are working and unavailable.

**Be flexible**

There will be noises, distractions and other items that you are not accustomed to while working from home. Remember, these items not only affect you, but anyone you speak to on the phone while in a conference call meeting or on a web meeting. Do what you can to a) accept that they will likely happen and b) avoid getting too stressed about them.

**Get up and "go" to work**

There are times when working in your PJs is a definite plus to working from home. However, studies show that you can be more productive if you get up, get dressed and go into your home office ready for your day. Wearing a pair of indoor shoes is a great way to feel like you are not at home. Feeling good about yourself has an impact on how you perform.

Keep the above in mind especially if you are using a webcam - others can see you and you and your work space should look professional and presentable.

**Establish clear boundaries between work and personal life**

Spending a large majority of your time in a home office can lead to decreased boundaries between your personal and work life. Establish boundaries to balance your efforts. Establish boundaries and determine how to best use the flexibility to balance your work and personal activities.

This may include educating and setting expectations with those close to you, such as friends, family and neighbours, about your work situation. It's not uncommon for others to perceive that because you are working from home you're available for a spontaneous coffee, expected to have dinner on the table by 5 p.m. or that you can watch the neighbour's kids.

Below are a few ideas on how to create a healthy balance between life and work.

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| **Take breaks** | It's easy to go to the fridge and bring your lunch back to your office and keep plugging away to stay productive. However not taking regular breaks can actually have the opposite effect on your productivity. Taking time away from your office to refresh yourself will increase your creativity and prevent burn out. |
| **Personal motivation is personal** | How do you personally motivate yourself? Are you an early riser, or do you get some of your greatest ideas at night? While you'll need to have a schedule that works with your team and your leader, and supports your customers, keep your personal preferences in mind to stay motivated and let your creativity flow. |
| **Take advantage of the opportunity for work-life balance** | As long as you adhere to the schedule you agreed to with your leader and follow the norms your team set up and focus on providing an exceptional customer experience, how you spend the rest of your time is up to you. Here are some ideas: <ul><li>Water your plants or walk your dog on your lunch hour</li><li>Take breaks and get outside for some fresh air</li><li>Use the time you would normally spend commuting to have an earlier or later conference call with colleagues in different time zones, take care of some housework or get a start on dinner preparation</li></ul> |