

5 Best Practices When Working Remotely

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As we are now firmly into the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations are still managing a workforce that has moved out of the office and into their homes. With one-third of organizations now having no intentions of returning to the traditional office environment when the pandemic subsides, for many, the transition out of the brick and mortar office is here to stay¹.

Although the transition to remote work in response to the pandemic may have been rushed for many, the number of individuals transitioning to remote work has been steadily increasing. In total, it is estimated that over half of the jobs in the U.S. could be remote at least on a part-time basis². As more workers move to working remotely, it is important to set yourself up for success in your remote work environment. Below are some tips to help you work effectively outside of the traditional office space.



Define your Space

Early in the pandemic many of us cobbled together home office spaces that also doubled as kitchen tables and classrooms. Now that most retail stores have restocked home office supplies, we can create the space that we need to work effectively. Whenever possible, your workspace should be separate from other spaces. This does not have to mean you need a dedicated room for your office, but it does mean defining where your workspace begins and ends. Although some variety in where you work can be helpful, it is important to avoid working on the couch or while in bed regularly. When work becomes associated with different spaces that are more often used for rest and relaxation, it can be harder for us to disconnect from work outside of work hours.

Establish Your Work Hours

Just because your morning commute may be shorter, working remotely does not mean that the time you save goes towards additional work hours. It is important to establish and stick to your agreed upon work schedule. Additionally, it can be helpful to engage in rituals that delineate the beginning and end of your work hours, whether that means changing in and out of your “work clothes” or going for a short walk around your neighborhood, this helps create a clear distinction between work time and non-work time.

Find your Peak Productivity Times

Whether you spend your workday in a shared office or not, you may be making your workday more difficult by not structuring your time appropriately to reflect your individual rhythms. Everyone has different circadian rhythms; these rhythms shift over time with age and environmental changes. Click the link [here](#) to take a short quiz and learn more about your waking and sleeping rhythms. By understanding your rhythms, you can structure your day more effectively and discuss with your leader what flexibility is available in your workday to align your work with your body’s natural rhythms so you can be more productive.

Over-Communicate

Technology has improved the ways in which we communicate and provide timely updates on our work progress. Communication means more than speaking with someone directly over the phone, email or in-person. It means making sure that your calendar is up to date and utilizing a team messaging program if your company has one. The article, [9 Top Workplace Team Chat Apps for Effective Team Communication in 2020](#), highlights some of the messaging platforms available. Effective communication can also be enhanced by using a project management tool. If your organization doesn't have one, check out these websites referencing top ranked platforms: [Best Project Management Software & Tools in 2021](#) and [Compare The 15 Best Project Management Software Of 2021](#). These tools allow for seamless communication without messy email chains or playing phone tag.

Cultivate Trust

Trust is a shared responsibility between you and your employer. Creating a trusting environment when working remote starts with establishing a clear remote work policy. If your organization does not have an established remote work policy, your involvement in its development is helpful to ensure that the policy meets your needs and expectations. Few behaviors support trust more than effective and timely communication. In addition, trust is supported by meeting deadlines, collaborating with others regularly and asking for help when necessary.

We Can Help

If you have questions about what your ideal working environment may be, [take this quiz](#). [VITAL WorkLife](#) is also here to support you in whatever stressors may be impacting you at home or work. For counseling, coaching and other resources contact us at **800.383.1908** or through your **VITAL WorkLife App**.

Sources:

¹ <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/how-much-will-remote-work-continue-after-the-pandemic>

² <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/how-to-create-an-effective-teleworking-program.aspx>

<https://www.flexjobs.com/employer-blog/best-practices-for-telecommuters/>

<https://www.gsa.gov/governmentwide-initiatives/telework/resources-for-managing-teleworkers>