



# HOW TO WORK SMARTER WHILE AT HOME

As large segments of the work force meet the challenges of COVID-19, working from home has become the new normal for many people.

Adapting your home into a work environment can be challenging, but there are a few small changes you can make to drastically improve your efficiency and daily routine.

Here are a few ways to get started.



## BE DILIGENT ABOUT YOUR ENVIRONMENT

When working from home, the lines between business and pleasure can become blurred. When you're in the same environment as your leisure activities, the temptation for distractions can be strong.

One way to clamp down on this is to impose a personal rule for yourself: *Only use your environment for business during work hours.*

The reason for this is more psychological than anything else. Though you may be used to surfing the web for news, sports, weather, or other things during breaks or downtime, doing those activities during your workday can get you in a bad habit of spending more and more time checking personal sites during work hours.

If you're struggling to stay disciplined, consider implementing strategies to help you resist distractions. These can include installing an app on your personal devices to block the non-work sites you visit most frequently, unplugging the TV, or putting your cell phone in a different room. When you view your environment as a space that's *solely* meant for work projects, it becomes easier to maintain focus throughout the day.



## STRETCH YOUR LEGS TO STRETCH YOUR ENERGY

It's common knowledge that chronic periods of prolonged sitting is bad for your health. Yet it can be even easier to fall into those couch potato trappings when you're away from the office. You aren't doing things like going to meetings or walking to coworkers' desks. You may even be working from a chair so comfy you don't want to get up!

But taking regular breaks is important. Even walking around your home and doing basic stretches (like the ones we all learned in gym class) for five minutes every hour can increase blood flow and work wonders for your health and your mind.

Also consider exercising once a day during a break. Even if you're stuck inside, there are plenty of options (like a recumbent bike or workout DVDs) that can help you stay active even when you aren't getting out.



## STICK TO YOUR SCHEDULE

When your day isn't structured, losing track of time is easy. Physically leaving your home to arrive at the office, staying in the office throughout your workday, and leaving to go home at night is one thing—but you don't have those natural dividing lines to break things up when working remote.

That's why it's important to create a schedule that works best for you.

Consider getting up at the same time every morning to go through your standard morning routine (breakfast, getting dressed, preparing any kids you have for school) before clocking in. Try to take your breaks at the same time each day to develop this routine further.

You should also collaborate with your coworkers, roommates, and/or family members to figure out a routine that provides the best work-life balance for everyone.

Take advantage of this added flexibility to create a schedule you're happy with!