

A GUIDE TO: SERVING YOURSELF WELL WHILE WORKING FROM HOME

Many people think that working from home is easy! Here's the thing: it's not as easy as some may think. Juggling life, working around family and children who are off school, remaining productive with your work while supporting your own mental and physical well-being can prove tricky. So to help you adjust to the transition from office to home, I'm sharing three key areas that you can think about, be mindful of and take action around to help you feel at ease, remain productive, serve yourself well and create the conditions for you to thrive.

A number one tip from one of my long-term clients – an executive assistant who has spent decades working from home: **LOSE THE GUILT...**

Working from home is the ultimate gift of trust in the workplace. If you have an 'always on' mentality, it's very easy to feel a sense of guilt if you don't spot something come in and respond to it instantly. That's ok, just remind yourself that the same would have happened in the office as messages and requests always come through when you're making a drink, chatting with colleagues, and are in meetings (or on the loo!). It happens and, along with regular breaks, all of those things will – and must – still happen when you're working remotely too.

1 LOOK AFTER YOUR MIND

BE KIND TO YOURSELF

If you haven't previously worked from home, much of this may be new and you may have a lot to learn, including new technology and how to motivate yourself while working in isolation among all the distractions of home. Lessen any self-expectations, and give yourself the time and space to get used to everything and you will eventually perfect your new routine and stride.

GET READY FOR WORK

Get dressed and put on clothes that you deem appropriate for work, whether you want to wear your suit or something less formal – whatever works for you. Although no-one will see you, it's essential to get out of your PJs. Take a shower, wash your hair; start the day afresh in mind and body.

SEPARATE YOUR WORKSPACE

Convert a spare bedroom or steal the kids' playroom in the short term. It's ideal for your productivity (and your sanity) if you can open the door to your work at the beginning of the day and close it again at the end. And if it's not feasible to work your normal 9-5, that's fine too; define working hours that will suit your home setting and let your manager know what you need.

TAKE BREAKS

You can't be constantly switched on. Neurologically, our mind can only focus for approximately 20 minutes at a time - at which point it needs a break. If you find yourself losing focus, that's ok: get up and do something different. Allow the distractions for a moment (put a wash on, make a cuppa, chat to the kids) then get back to it when you're ready.

RECHARGE

Home working and being in front of a screen is tiring. A 15-minute power nap when you're flagging can make all the difference to your productivity. Also, neuroscience has proven that meditating for 10 minutes restores the mind to a similar level as sleeping for an hour. Meditation is the mind's version of washing your hands – it's cleansing and refreshing. Try free versions of meditation apps like Headspace or Insight Timer.



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2 LOOK AFTER YOUR BODY

EXERCISE

Your mind and body are one system and affect each other. Your mind needs to be energised and the body plays a huge part in that. Whether it's a walk, a run, a workout or dog walk with the family, it doesn't matter, just do some form of exercise you'll enjoy every day. Exercising with family members or online communities can be even more fun.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

We are all different. Some people are more awake and productive in the morning, others in the afternoon. Notice when your energy levels are higher and lower throughout the day and when they are lower, this could be a time to get up, get out and exercise.

TUNE INTO YOUR EMOTIONS

If your emotions or energies become too flat or low, you can become unproductive and get into a rut. Up your energies by putting on your favourite music to work to. If your energies or emotions are too high (for example if you get frustrated by your work or distractions), close your eyes and breathe deeply for two minutes; breathe in for three counts and out for four. Stretching practices like yoga can also be very useful for balancing you up. Free YouTube classes like 'Yoga with Adriene' are a great starting point.

3 MAINTAIN YOUR CONNECTIONS

CONNECT WITH PEOPLE

Home working can feel isolating because we aren't naturally in the company of others. Reach out to your colleagues and managers at least once a day. Have a conversation that's not just about work – talk about how you're doing and find out what's going on in their world. They may be in the same boat as you, experiencing the same challenges. Connection is a two-way thing so don't only expect people to make the contact with you – reach out. If your workplace has a team platform like Yammer or Workspace, use it: check in on what others are doing and share your stories.

CONNECT TO YOUR ENVIRONMENT

We are part of a world that is so much bigger than us – even if it feels a little quiet at the moment. Be near a window and open it if the weather is good. Get outside when you can, observe the trees and the greenery, hear the sounds, take in the air and connect to the world.



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