

If a work from home request is approved, employees must arrange the hours they will be available and working with their manager. Please review the following best practices for a successful work from home arrangement:

SET A DESIGNATED WORK AREA

Though this may seem trivial, choosing a spot in your home that is designated for work is an important step you can take to set yourself up for success. Choose a quiet, distraction-free spot that you can work from every day that you are working from home. This could be a spare bedroom that you've turned into a home office, a desk located in the corner of the living room, or even the dining room table. Stay away from working in your bed or on the couch, as these areas are associated with relaxation in your brain, which could negatively impact your productivity.



Make sure your workspace functions efficiently for you and your work style. Treat your home work area as you would an office cubicle. Make your workspace a place you enjoy going to each day; an area where you can focus and do your best work.

PLAN AND TEST COMMUNICATIONS

Technology is a great way to stay connected, but only if it works well. Make sure your internet speed is fast enough and your phone signal is strong enough to allow for clear communication.

When you are the only one working remotely while everyone else is in the office, meetings can be a big challenge. It can be hard to hear what is going on in a room full of people talking. It can be even more difficult if collaboration is going on in small groups within the room. Also, make sure you have a quiet space to be when you are having meetings, so that background noise does not become a distraction for others.

It can be easy to feel disconnected with what's going on in the office, so remaining engaged with your co-workers is key. If you are feeling lonely, reach out to a co-worker for a brief chat. Schedule regular check-ins with your team and your manager.



VIRTUAL MEETINGS



PHONE CALLS



INSTANT MESSAGING



EMAIL

MAKE SURE YOUR EQUIPMENT, NETWORK, AND WORK PROGRAMS ARE PROTECTED

Working from home introduces another layer of potential risks. A surge protector must be used to protect your equipment. Surge protectors are different than power strips, so it is important to understand the difference. Security of sensitive information is your responsibility. Lock your computer when you walk away even when you're at home for an extra layer of protection. Make sure you understand your responsibility to mitigate the risk of a cyber-attack while working from home.

Working from home means that you often have to be your own IT person. You need to be able to troubleshoot issues, because they may not be easy to fix remotely. You also need to know how to troubleshoot your own internet and phone issues as those will no longer be supported by corporate IT.

DRESS LIKE YOU'RE GOING INTO THE OFFICE

The way you dress has been proven to affect you psychologically. This means that although it may sound like a great idea to work from home in your pajamas, in reality, it isn't. While you do not need to dress up in business formal attire if you are working from home, you should take the time to shower, brush your teeth, and get ready for the day. Aim to dress in casual—not sloppy—attire.



AVOID DISTRACTIONS AND STAY ON TASK

The doorbell rings, the dog needs out, your spouse and/or kids get home, any of these things can distract and pull you away from work.

One big challenge of working from home is accountability. Without co-workers or managers nearby, it can be easy to become distracted and fall behind on work. Remember that working from home is a privilege and that it will become apparent if you are not putting the same effort into your work at home as you did in the office.

Stay focused on work throughout the day to maintain consistent productivity. Avoid online distractions as well. Limit the time spent on email, social media, and websites unrelated to work, just as you would if you were in the office. Set a timer on your phone or computer if necessary.



EVALUATE YOURSELF PERIODICALLY

To ensure that working from home is working for you, be sure to conduct self-assessments periodically. Things to include in your assessment could be:

- Are your available working hours complementing your position?
- What were you accomplishing in the office versus out of the office?
- Are you meeting all of your deadlines?
- Are you feeling connected with your co-workers?



REMEMBER TO TAKE BREAKS

Just like you are encouraged to take breaks while you're in the office, remember to allow yourself time throughout the day for quick breaks. If you need a short break to gather your thoughts, try walking around the house or down the street, stretching, or making a snack or meal.

If you need to take a longer break or socialize, plan time in your schedule and clock out for this. A major advantage of working from home is having flexibility. Before you take an hour or two out of your day, though, make sure to communicate and check with your manager so that you remain compliant with company policies.



BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF

Working from home is not a viable option for every employee. If you find that working from home is negatively impacting your productivity or making you feel disconnected from your team and your work, speak to your manager.