



# STAYING WELL WHILE WORKING FROM HOME

## INCREASED HOME WORKING

Whether military or civilian, remote working is on the increase. Establishing healthy work practices from home is an art.

Few of us have the luxury of a separate office, and trying to work on your laptop in the living room whilst juggling home distractions (children, housework, DIY) does not help this adjustment.

**Here are our Top Tips to make working from home work for you.**

**Relax shoulders**

**Lower back supported**



*Good Ergonomic set up at home helps concentration and reduces risk of injury*

## YOUR PHYSICAL WORKSPACE

Aim for as much of the following as possible:

### Quiet Work Space

Living in a shared space? Negotiating & scheduling specific work slots helps everyone be clear when not to disturb you. Discussion of shared activities you will enjoy together *after work* can help children understand the arrangements.

For noise reduction, headphones (including noise-cancellation), or ear plugs can be handy.



### Ergonomic Set up

Your body will thank you for a **good ergonomic work environment**. This not only helps reduce risk of injury and fatigue, but helps concentration. Basic recommendations include:

- desk or table at the correct height
- a good work chair (height- adjustable, suitable back support, adjustable seat angle)
- a computer desktop, or laptop with a separate screen at eye level
- a sit-stand workstation is appropriate for some

Schedule in **regular small breaks** and add variety to your day by alternating calls, emails, stretches or short walks.



Your DMRC Vocational OT can assist with remote recommendations for military employees. Transitioning or civilian employees; the **Access to Work Scheme** may be able to fully or part fund ergonomic office and home-based adaptations.

Should a face-to-face ergonomic assessment at home not be available try the free online self-check via [www.workrightathome](http://www.workrightathome). Information and video tips available at: [www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home](http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home)

### Separate Workspace from Non-Workspace

A specific space or corner used just for work is recommended. If not in a separate room, consider using a curtain, screen or room divider.

Screens, books and work items can be covered or tidied away at the end of the day, and during your personal time.



## Optimal Internet Connection

- Your internet provider might offer more bandwidth for the same price.
- Have your mobile WIFI ready just in case the main connection is interrupted.
- If you can, get a good video screen and a high-resolution videoconference camera.



Always check your background represents what you want to convey during video meetings.



## YOUR INTERNAL WORKSPACE

Separate 'Work-Mode' From 'Relaxation-Mode'



### Routines and Boundaries

- Stick to regular start & finish times and to **manageable working hours**. It is tempting to work more than the agreed hours from home due to fear of 'not doing enough'.
- Our brain likes **habits and visual signals**. Wearing one outfit for work and another for relaxation can help. Just as you would when you move between your workplace and home.
- Consider 'rituals' to get into 'work mode' and 'relaxation mode': setting up the desk with special attention or even a walk around the block in the morning. After work, tidying the workspace, spending a moment in the garden, or exercise might help you forget about work and relax.
- Decide through which platform/media you want to receive work messages. Via work email only (perfectly acceptable)? Would your SMS be off-limits? WhatsApp seems handy but would work-related messages compromise your evenings?
- Let colleagues know when you are most likely to check your emails (limiting this to three times a day maximum).
- Gently **self-monitor** how you are doing. Recent surveys found that working from home can make people more susceptible to reaching for junk food, alcohol and/or internet distractions. Maybe you can find out which actual need you are trying to meet?
- Try switching all devices off for a few hours in the evening, and especially before bedtime to help your brain 'shut off' and help with sleep.
- **Time away** is essential to **protect your recovery**. Strictly avoid checking work during your annual leave. Out-of-office messages communicating when you are/are not available are helpful to others.

### Team Communication

- Working remotely, you might want to find ways to replace meetings but also the informal chats at the desk and over lunch.
- **Regular communication** on a need-to-know basis via digital channels helps the team feel informed. You could mention your activities, goals or accomplishments.
- **Virtual meetings** with a prepared agenda can be ideal to keep things focused on problem-solving.
- Videoconferencing etiquette: Set up the background, keep your video on and excuse yourself by chat if you need to leave.
- Consider inviting others to collaborative or creative online activities with **shared documents/screens**. Problem-solving in real time helps to bridge office and home. Basic updates can be done by email.



*Lastly, you are permitted to change your mind about working from home.  
It is not for everyone, or it might only be right for a limited period of time.  
You can always review the arrangement with a trusted colleague or manager.*

### Resources

Free online ergonomic health-check: [www.workrightathome.com](http://www.workrightathome.com)  
Health and Safety Executive: [www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home](http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home)  
Access to Work Scheme: <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/access-work>  
Vocational Rehabilitation Association Toolkit (2020)  
G. Bolles (2020): Your New Home Work: Working Distributed during 'the Great Reset'  
CIPD (2019) Enabling Flexible Working.  
Evans, H. (2018). The influence of personality traits and ICT use on the boundary management of home-based teleworkers. PhD Thesis, Loughborough University.

