

Working From Home

Guide for Managers



Working From Home



As a Manager, you play a critical role in supporting our people through this rapid and unprecedented period of change. Setting clear expectations with your people will assist them in transitioning to working from home more effectively.

It is also critical that you look after yourself. You will experience a range of reactions and emotions, like your team and colleagues. Ensuring you take a moment to take a breath, focus on what is within your control, and proactively seek the support from your leader or a trusted colleague to help you remain calm and balanced.

How you can help support your team:

Acknowledging this change is necessary due to unusual circumstances and that everyone is in the same boat. There is no one worldwide who is not facing this.

Accepting that it feels different and that we don't have certainty around what's ahead.

Frame the situation and consider the ability to work from home as a positive experience.

Create a plan of action to ensure it is the most effective it can be.

Successful working at home is underpinned by open and transparent communication between you and your people, clear action plans, regular reviews, and a supportive workplace culture. Working together, we can ensure operational continuity as well as individual flexibility to manage other commitments.

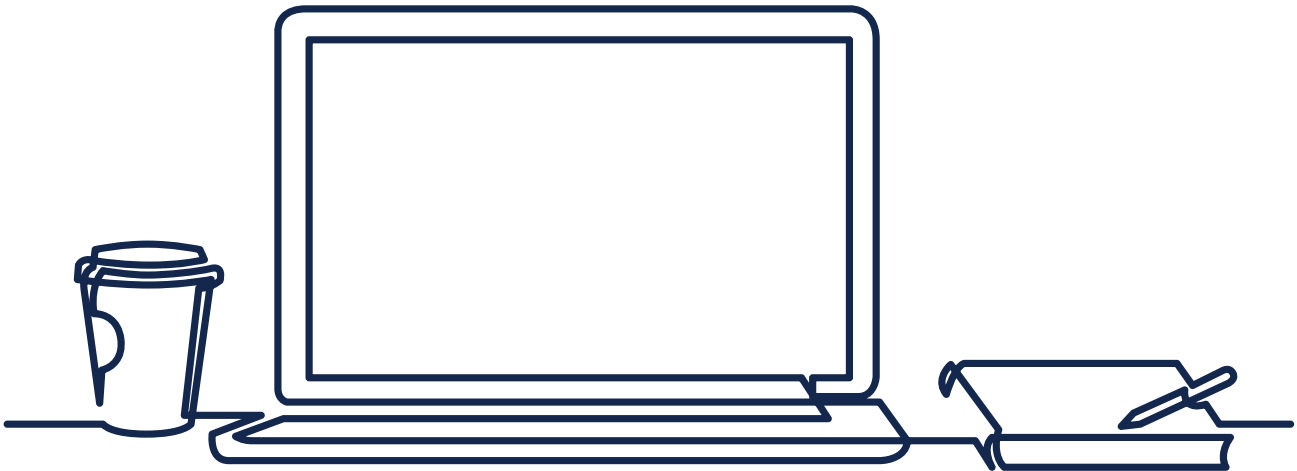
Successful working from home looks like:

- You have established a rhythm of daily communication with your people, colleagues, and key stakeholders.
- You have set clear expectations of what is required from your team.
- There is shared accountability for making it useful.
- You and your team feel empowered to work at home and deliver the work.
- You have trusted relationships and work on the assumption that everyone is doing the right thing or is well-intended.
- You and the team have the confidence to ask for help or flag issues and ask questions when needed.

Contents

- 1.** The Setup
- 2.** Effectiveness
- 3.** Communication
- 4.** Wellbeing
- 5.** Engagement
- 6.** Support

1. Working From Home. *The Setup*



Everyone will need the ability to work from home, and taking a proactive approach to setting up a work space will enable a smoother transition. Whether you have a dedicated workspace or not, checking that you have the tools you require and the technology to access systems will make the transition easier.

Office Space or Not

Consider whereabouts in your home is a suitable location to work from home. Ideally, you will require a flat surface where you can position your computer (and be able to get up and walk away from), a comfortable chair, and light so that you are not straining to see.

As a Manager, check in with your people to understand what space they are using and ensuring they have the best possible setup under the circumstances.

You might do this by:

- Running through the ergonomic setup and tips with them when they transition home, helping them make any possible adjustments, such as ensuring the correct screen height.
- Check to see they are taking regular breaks to move and stretch.
- Ensuring they know to advise you if they do have any risks, issues, or concerns as soon as possible.

Sharing the space

We know we may all be sharing our homes with the other people in our life, possibly children and partners who are also working from home. We understand that this will create additional challenges to finding space to work and will require flexibility in how you and your team deliver their work.

The wellbeing of you, your family and your team is the utmost priority.

Creating a flexible approach to work

As a Manager, it is your role to work with your teams to ensure that they feel supported. This may require a flexible approach to how and when your people may be able to perform and complete their work.

While each situation will be unique, here are a few things to consider when agreeing on a flexible arrangement:

- Take the time to understand the context of the individual and their situation. This might include: Who
- is at home, what space they have available to work, what hours are possible based on their schedule.
- Review their current workload and help them to determine their priorities.
- Ensure you are both clear on the desired outcomes.
- Consider a working rhythm that you both might trial and review to ensure it works for both of you.

Remember, this is not business as usual, so agreeing a flexible work schedule of hours and deliverables is what is required for the current situation. It should be reviewed regularly to determine whether it continues to be appropriate.

A few *tips* if you are working with kids around:

Flexibility: while you might be inclined to create a schedule for your kids, or have high hopes of hours of learning, remember this is a whole new experience for everyone and kids will look for flexibility and comfort at times that might not fit this.

Expectations: Initially, the idea of being off school might be exciting for kids, but the reality of being at home with their parents is as challenging for them as it may be for you trying to get work done. Usually, everyone will need to adjust, and every day must be taken as it comes, and as parents, we will need to be thoughtful of setting a positive tone. Our children will take their lead from us.

How your kids see you transition into this change: They will hear you speak with others on the phone, you will need to work together as a family to ensure everyone remains mindful and aware of what people are hearing and experiencing.



Working-from-home Checklist

- Review and update your personal and emergency details, including an alternative contact number on the appropriate system
- Ensure you have files saved on OneDrive, Teams or other appropriate drives that you will be able to access
- Review your technology and identify any additional resources you may need, including:
 - Computer, Mouse, Keyboard
 - Charging cables
 - Internet Access
 - Headphones / Speaker
 - Stationary – paper, post-its, pens
 - Check connectivity and access to all required systems and programs
- Set-up your workspace: Utilise the workstation self-assessment checklist to create a safe and suitable work environment (to the best of your ability)

2. Working From Home. *Effectiveness*

Through effective planning, clarity over goals, and establishing a rhythm for working, you can maximise your efficiency and outcomes. Managers will need to pay attention to how people are working together in this new environment as it may take some longer than others to get used to new ways of working and working together remotely.

It is vital everyone takes responsibility for when you can work and how they communicate this with others, and your Manager will support you to do this if required.

Create a Plan & Operating Rhythm for the Team

As a Manager, you will play a critical role in helping your people establish a plan for how your team members can complete their work.

As a starting point, you should discuss when your team members will be able to perform their role and:



- **Start and finish times:** This means creating dedicated amounts of time to work on specific tasks. This may include starting and finishing at times that are not the “usual” operating hours of the team but are the hours that the team member can work.
- **Taking breaks:** This includes ensuring there are regular intervals for breaks and moving around.
- **Know when team members** will “log-off” for the day.

For the ongoing success of working from home, it is essential you can ‘switch off’ from work at the end of your day and look after your mental health and wellbeing.

Note: It is ok if your arrangement needs to change or be flexible to accommodate others in your household or team as the situation changes.

Create clarity

Take time to reflect on what outcome you are trying to reach. Set clear goals, actions, and check-ins and check with your leader if you are unsure.



What you are trying to achieve by when. Is it realistic?



What do you need to reach the goal? Who else will need to be involved, and what time do they have available?



How often do you need to check in on how you are tracking? Set a cadence with others for review and think the most effective way of doing this – email, skype, etc



Celebrate reaching goals together and share success. Ask for help if there are barriers to achieving the goals.

Managing time *effectively*

Discuss these with your team by asking them questions to understand better where they are spending their time and where they may need support from you.

Useful *tips*

- Know the tasks are most valuable for you to spend time on and maximise the time spent there
- Take ownership over your time, see it as a choice to spend time where you choose
- Narrow tasks down to the few important priorities
- Make time to “think, reflect, plan, listen, and sleep.”
- Create “chunks” of “flow” time where you can focus on singular tasks
- Set a time to work on a task rather than focus on the outcome e.g., “I will work for 45 minutes on this task” as opposed to “I will work for as long as it takes”
- Create “themed” days where you can reduce calibration between topics/tasks e.g., “People” or a project you need to work on
- Reflect on what is “in your control” to determine actions that you can take
- Establish a clear operating cadence for communication within your team e.g., daily check-ins, weekly virtual coffee check-ins

3. Working From Home. *Communication*

Do you have the contact details of everyone you need?

Do they have your contact details?

Communication is about how people experience you. Establishing clear standards with your colleagues will help you maintain strong working relationships.

Communicating your priorities and considering others'

If you communicate what you are planning on working on and ask others the same, you can build a picture of what you will collectively achieve. Also, consider what can be a 'later' task – is the work critical right now, or is anyone else dependant on the outcome. Be open to discussions around whether it is your priority right now.

As a Manager, you have a role to clearly articulate your expectations to your team around how often and by what means you want them to communicate. Staying in regular contact with staff who are working remotely is critical to support Wellbeing, reduce isolation, and identify and resolve issues quickly.

Useful tips

- **Set clear expectations** with your team around how they should communicate their availability with you and within the team. For example, they can email you a weekly schedule, should they put their working time in your diary, so you know when they are working.
- **Make time for regular check-ins:** to ensure no one feels isolated - phone or video is the best method of communication. Check-ins can be short and sharp 15-minute sessions each day. You may choose to start each session with a different or alternating question, for example: "What support do you need from the team today?", "When are you taking a break today" or "Use one work to tell us how you are feeling today."
- **Encourage staff to schedule some time for themselves** during the workday to maintain their mental and physical health and Wellbeing.
- **Bring your team together** so they can support one another and share moments from their week, including achievements. You can do this via a "virtual coffee or tea" for a more personal connection.

Communication Checklist

This can be used with individuals and across the team to set expectations:

- Agree on availability and how people will connect when they are working remotely, and don't forget to review this as it may change from week to week.
- Ensure everyone is clear about when you are available to work.
- Consider how you want your team to let you know their availability and vice versa.
- Know how you will communicate when you have planned meetings, e.g., skype (F2F), mobile, messenger, etc. What questions might you have, will you turn your camera on, do you need to submit questions or feedback before or after meetings?
- Describe how you will communicate urgent issues that might arise. Is this better in text, or do you have a code such as a "flag" in an email that you can use?
- Decide when you will use out of office/ automatic replies/ voicemails to communicate your absence.
- Consider how you will discuss your work priorities and output with your team/Manager. Is there a weekly update you can provide?

Useful Tips:

- Use sharing calendar functionality to view each other's ability and even share email if that is necessary
- Consider using a daily email to your team around your whereabouts or work output updates
- Ask for help if you need it and check in with others to see what support they need
- Share your goals and what you need to reach them

4. Working From Home. *Wellbeing*

Your wellbeing is our priority. We understand that everyone's experience may be different. Some helpful tips for taking care of yourself and others:

Our Physical Health

What to do if someone becomes unwell – either you or a member of your family that you need to care for:

- Seek medical support as you would normally do
- Notify your Manager, provide detail around time frames where possible
- Consider urgent work that needs to be completed in your absence
- Agree how you will communicate and check-in

STAYING HEALTHY AT HOME



STAY HYDRATED



EAT A BALANCED
AND HEALTHY DIET



GET UP
AND MOVE

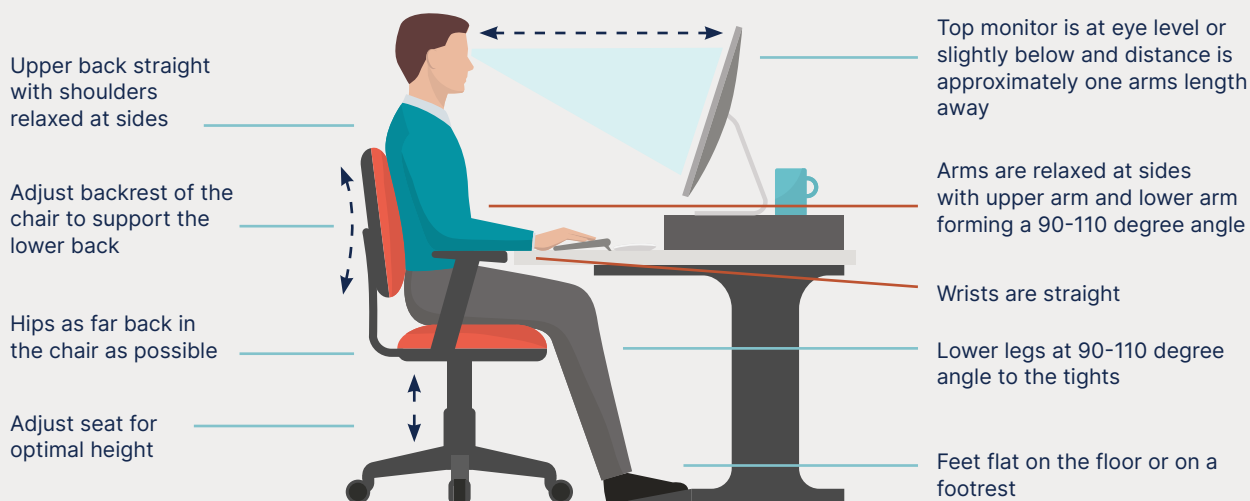


SLEEP

Home Ergonomics

If you have a dedicated workstation at home, here are some guidelines.

Key Features of Correct Workstation Set-up



If you do not have the space or equipment, here are some tips that might help:

- Place your laptop or screen on a high flat surface, using whatever you can to raise the screen, so it is eye level.
- If you can, use a separate mouse and keyboard. The laptop's keyboard and mouse will be too high if the computer is elevated to an eye-line.
- Doing this allows you to alternate between sitting and standing to create movement and reduce tension associated with being seated for prolonged periods.

Don't

- Lie in bed with your laptop.
- Work in the dark.
- Look down at your screen.

Your mental health

We know that prolonged social isolation can lead to loneliness, reduced creativity, and productivity. It is crucial to look after yourself to ensure you can maintain a positive frame of mind. Good work is excellent for our mental health, and we must preserve the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of work wherever we can.

Tips for maintaining mental health at home:

Establish clear boundaries

Being clear about when you are working is just as important as when you are not going to be working. It doesn't mean you can't be flexible but organising your hours and day that will help you achieve a healthy balance.

Set a routine

It's essential to get up and get started, to take regular breaks, including a lunch break, and to finish working and turn off at an appropriate time. It is tempting, but try to avoid working in your pyjamas all day. It is likely a significant change already, so try not to lose all your daily routines at once.

Create regular breaks

Stop to stretch, meditate, and have a proper lunch break, make something nice to eat, and eat away from your work area. Try and get outside and get some natural light, and some exercise - it's easy to get dragged into work out of hours.

Make time for social connection

Proactively reach out to your colleagues, to maintain relationships. If possible, use video, have lunch, or a "virtual coffee" to check-in for an informal chat.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle

Be careful to maintain eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, and getting quality sleep.

Seek support

If you are finding working from home challenging, speak with your manager to address the issues you are experiencing.

Working from home further support

Reach out for help when you need it. Here is a list of places you can access support:

- Your Manager
- Employee Assistance Program and the Benestar free mobile app

Be empathetic

For some of us, this is a significant change to life and work: recognise and acknowledge that change and be patient as everyone adjusts to the new “normal.” Understand that many will be challenging situations e.g., kids at home, social isolation. Connect with people to discuss how you are feeling and how they are doing.

Connection is critical

Emphasise the importance of creating time to connect and be present. If the meeting is not necessary or could be shorter, then possibly cancel or reduce the time allocated, so everyone gets something out of it.

Building trust takes commitment

This is often easier when teams have had the opportunity to spend time together, but this might not always be the case. Ensure there are opportunities to interact socially by using video, facetime, or even being on the phone while having a cup of tea or, if possible, walking the dog.

Embrace flexibility

People may be working varied hours, possibly needing to work early or late in the day. Consider this when setting up meetings and try and align where possible.

Excellent communication

Audio and written etiquette are vital. Most laptop speakers and microphones are much worse than a cheap set of earbuds. Don't forget to be on mute if you have background noise, don't speak over the top or take up all the time, take turns to speak, be polite and ensure everyone is involved by asking questions and listening.

Acknowledge

Acknowledge that this situation, whatever our circumstance is going to have an impact on how we think and feel about ourselves and the world we live in. Be mindful of your reactions and the effect they may have on others, taking time to pause, reflect, and consider what you will say and how you will behave with care.

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