**Looking After Your Wellbeing when Working From Home**

Looking after your own wellbeing is about the mind and the body; staying healthy includes putting in place both physical and mental measures.

It takes time and energy to look after yourself and others, but it is time well spent – just a few minor changes can make the world of difference to how you and your colleagues are feeling.

Use this factsheet as a handy reminder of the things that keep us mentally and physically prepared for the daily challenges that we face when working from home.

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**Create a Routine**

For some of us ‘working from home’ is new and let’s be honest, it can be hard. Create a routine early on – it’s the only way. Keep your work life organised and a healthy divide between work life and home life.

Your routine could be as simple as ensuring that you set your alarm or that you that follow your normal morning routine as if you are working in the office; not forgetting the importance of having breakfast.

It can be beneficial to go further and make your lunch in the morning and prepare your snacks. An easy way of avoiding skipping meals and reaching for the biscuits.

**Design Your Workspace**

In an Ideal world this will be a separate place in the house, but we have to be realistic and work with the space that we have available. Ensure that your space is organised, and you have all the equipment and stationary items that you need to hand. Avoid clutter and set up your equipment to avoid physical strain.

Check your workstation regularly to avoid bad habits creeping in, using the guidance provided on how to set up your workstation; and don’t forget to complete your DSE risk assessment.

**Manage Your Own Expectations**

In theory, this should be great working from home. The reality can be somewhat different, and the transition can take some getting used to.

If thinks are unsettled for a while, give yourself a break – the new normal with come, it just takes time. The time will vary from one person to another so try not to compare yourself to others who appear to have everything under control – the reality is not always as it seems.

**Communication**

This is probably the biggest challenge that teams face when remote working and the area that is the most essential for our wellbeing, and that of others. Be prepared to check in with your colleagues as frequently as possible.

Think about getting 2/3 of your colleagues on a conference call at tea break time or virtual tea breaks on a video conferencing tool. We have never been better prepared with technology to keep in touch – now let’s use the tools effectively.

Celebrate success, however small, with the team – it’s not bragging, it’s encouraging others to do the same. Positivity breeds positivity and every talking point should be exploited to its full potential. Take the time to appreciate every single win.

If you haven’t heard from someone in a while, check in with them – see if they are OK. A good sign that someone is struggling is reduced communication. Take the time to look after each other and help others beat the isolation. If you are struggling, ask for help**.**

**Take Regular Breaks**

If you are working from home, it is really important to take breaks. Don’t forget or feel guilty about taking a break.

You don’t have to have to leave the house, you can break the day up with household chores just as long as you are taking time away from your screen – giving your body a chance to readjust to a more natural position.

No matter what you choose to do, try to take regular screen breaks and stretch throughout the day. Take a clearly defined lunch break and move away from your workspace.

Also aim to have a break of 5 minutes an hour away from your screen. This can just be doing another activity or making a cup of tea!

**Have a Balanced Diet and Healthy Lifestyle**

Try to eat regularly and healthily, ensuring that you drink 2 litres of water a day. As an alternative to your usual tea or coffee, why not try a herbal tea or hot water with a slice of lemon.

Don’t forget to get a good night’s sleep. Not getting enough sleep can leave us unproductive the following day and for prolonged periods, a poor sleep pattern will affect resilience and mental health.

**Accept that Distractions Will Happen**

Don’t beat yourself up if pets or children distract you for a while – it will happen. Deal with the distraction, reset the calm and then continue.

**Take Time to Relax and Keep Active**

Most importantly, take time to relax and engage in activities that you like to do. Maybe spending time with your immediate family, put some music on or practice some mindfulness – there are lots of apps available for you to try.

Or just go for a walk – it’s a beautiful world - be curious, indulge your senses and observe what is beautiful or unusual in the world. Being aware of your thoughts and feelings as they arise, without getting lost in them, can improve your well-being.

If you prefer to stay inside, you can include some movement from home, put on a workout Video (from YouTube or a DVD you have), get sweaty with the housework or put on some music and have a dance. Exercise will help you to feel more awake and alert, and your concentration and sleep will improve.

**Create Your Own Schedule**

On the next page we give you an outline to help you create your own schedule:

**Make Your Own Schedule**

Use the template below to make your own schedule:

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| --- | --- |
| **Wake Up Time – 7.00AM** | Set an alarm, have breakfast and get dressed. Keeping your usual routine helps you **click into ‘work mode.**’ Not forgetting that first cup of coffee, tea or whatever drink helps get you started. |
| **TOP TIP – Getting Prepared** | A little addition to your normal routine. Set up your work area. Make sure that your equipment is all switched on and your pens and stationery are available. Start the day organised.  It is a good idea to **prepare your snacks and lunch** too. Not only will this enable you to keep focused without the additional distraction, but can make sure that you eat healthily and don’t just reach for the biscuits. |
| **Start Work** | Ensure you have all the equipment you require and are sitting in a **comfortable position**.  You may have a routine with checking in with the office or saying good morning to colleagues. Aim to be positive. Your behaviour can help lift others.  Set yourself **2/3 daily goals** – things that you are going to achieve. It can be very easy to work on many different tasks and not complete any of them. Work SMART. |
| **To Do List** | Write yourself a **to-do list** and work on things when you are most productive. Have a schedule and stick to your list. Use timers or reminders to limit screen time or manage your productivity. |
| **Tea Break (e.g. 10.30AM)** | It’s **time for a break** and a well-earned cuppa (maybe try a herbal tea) and to check in on what others in your house are up to; or make a call to a colleague for a quick ‘hi, how are you.’  Just a quick 10-15 minutes to give your eyes and brain a recharge. |
| **TOP TIP – Maintaining Contact** | It’s vital to maintain **outside contact and social interaction** and we have never been better prepared for this. Use apps, video conferencing, telephone etc to vary the medium of communication. |
| **Lunch Break** | Many of us skip lunch when in the office, but now more than ever this break is important. **Get away from your** **screen**, refresh yourself or use the time to complete household chores.  Make sure you eat enough throughout the day not forgetting those important 2 litres of water.  (But also try not to snack more than normal! It can be all to easy to reach for the fridge when working from home). |
| **Tea Break (approx. 3.00PM)** | This is the perfect time for **some outside time.** Spend some time in the garden, take a walk round the block, or throwing a ball for your dog (if you have one – a dog that is, not a ball). |
| **Finish Work** | Before you leave your working day to switch back into you time, look back at what you achieved during the day and spend 5 minutes ticking of the items you have finished today and thinking about tomorrow’s agenda. You can ask yourself “what went well today, what didn’t go so well, what can I learn from this and what could I do better”.  5 minutes reflection and planning can help you feel in control, appreciate what you have achieved and get you prepared to have a great day tomorrow. |

**Work Safely**

Incorporate the following into your schedule:

1. Break up long spells of work with rest breaks (at least 5 minutes every hour) or changes in activity
2. Change position regularly to avoid awkward or static postures
3. Get up, move about, do stretching exercises
4. Avoid eye strain by regularly changing focus and blinking.

**Your Wellbeing**

If you do find you are struggling talk to someone. Don’t bottle it up. We all have good days and bad days – we are human after all. You can talk to a close colleague who may be going through the same adjustments working from home or talk to your manager.

**[Put details of who employee can speak to e.g. their manager, HR. If you use health and safety concern forms remind them of these[[1]](#endnote-1) – as wellbeing is part of health and safety]**

**[If you have an Employee Assistance Programme or Home Working Coaching[[2]](#endnote-2) put details here so that individuals know who they can speak to].**

1. On-line forms to allow employees to raise concerns about health and safety. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Home Working Coaching is provided by external wellbeing experts with regular assessments and targeted intervention. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)