

Tips to working from home...successfully

Following the outbreak of Covid-19 and its impact on the nation, employees and employers are being asked to "self-quarantine" and implement "social distancing".



Lyndy van den Barselaar, managing director at ManpowerGroup South Africa.

“The Covid-19 pandemic is a societal issue and not just an employer issue. We all share the responsibility and as such, one of the most responsible things employers can do is limit human interaction. Working remotely, especially from home, can be a difficult task for some in at first – especially if one is used to working within a structured office environment,” says Lyndy van den Barselaar, managing director at ManpowerGroup South Africa.

Here's some specific advice on how to make a success of working remotely:

Create a work schedule

- Set a work schedule, create a routine and stick to it.

“Yes, we are in a crisis and it’s totally natural to feel panicked and out-of-sorts over all that is going on. Nonetheless, it’s key to stick to deliverables and goals,” says van den Barselaar.

- Take lunch and coffee breaks to recharge your batteries between tasks.

“Sometimes, one can fall into the trap of feeling like you have to over deliver because you are not in the office. Remember to take short breaks in between tasks to avoid burnout and ensure you are able to function optimally,” adds van den Barselaar.

- Make use of the online tools available such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Skype to schedule video meetings.

Have a set office space

- Designate a specific space in your home for your office.

“It is important to make the distinction between your living and working space, in order to avoid the trap of an ‘always-on’ lifestyle. Keep your personal relaxing spaces, like your bedroom and living room, separate from your workspace,” says van den Barselaar.

- Choose a space where you will have minimal interruptions. Don’t underestimate the distractions from children, pets, TV and household chores.
- Store all work-related files, reference materials and supplies in that space. Better yet, go paperless, by scanning hard copies of documents using tools such as Dropbox, Evernote, Google Drive or Microsoft One Drive.

Get organised

- Every Monday morning, create a list of all the activities you have to accomplish for the upcoming week.
- At the end of each workday, create a to-do list of all the tasks you have to complete the next day, starting with the most to the least important.
- Create a filing system to help you be your most productive self.
- Organise your office space in a manner that facilitates your best work.
- Have the items you use most frequently within reach.
- Schedule regular check-in meetings with your manager and team to ensure you are staying on top of your actions.

Have the right equipment

- Invest in equipment that will enable you to do your job effectively and efficiently.

“If you have video meetings with your manager each week, for example, make sure that your computer has the right camera, speed and memory for this,” says van den Barselaar.

- Since you will be doing most of your work on the computer, and transferring work via the internet, make sure that you have reliable internet and a safe connection.

“Make use of a VPN if possible, to ensure the safety of your documents and information,” van den Barselaar suggests.

- Have a reliable back-up system.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle

- Even though you are encouraged not to attend the gym, take time to exercise regularly, be it at home or going for a walk outside.

“This can seem like a task that is separate from your work life, but keeping yourself active and healthy can assist in managing stress and creating a positive work-life balance,” says van den Barselaar.

- Practice regular handwashing with soap and water and in the instance that you should need to leave your home, always have sanitiser within reach.
- Implement social distancing but nothing should stop you from arranging a video call with friends or family after work to keep the loneliness at bay.

“We are entering uncharted territory, however being productive and delivering results should continue to be a priority,” concludes van den Barselaar.

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