

Working from home

Tips from a long-term home worker

I started to work exclusively from home in 2008 when I decided to move from London to Edinburgh. I had thought I would be told I would have to resign and find a new job in Scotland but my manager at the time was ahead of her time and far-sighted (you know who you are Niccola!). She said she saw no reason why I couldn't do my job remotely.

Now, in these unprecedented times, almost everyone has to work from home, so I thought I would share my experience and some top tips. First, I'll share what I ought to do according to all those work from home and self-care blogs that are out there. Then I'll tell you what actually happens.

I would like to say that my daily routine is to wake at the same time every day. I drink a cup of hot water and lemon before my daily yoga and meditation practice followed by a bit of gratitude journaling. I dress for success in my work clothes which are different to my leisure clothes and style my hair and apply make-up.

I eat a healthy breakfast away from my work and sleeping space before logging onto my computer with a big glass of water by my side. I check the news and my social media for half an hour before clearing my inbox. I switch off all notifications as I settle down to some concentrated work in silence or perhaps with some calming classical music in the background. I schedule regular activity breaks when I stretch, move or dance. I stop for lunch and go outside for a walk or run before eating a healthy not too carb heavy lunch. I check my emails for the second time in the day before turning off notifications again for concentrated work in the afternoon – stopping only for another activity break or two (meetings are only for scheduled meetings days). Finally, I log off at the end of my working day, having cleared all the emails that have come into my inbox in the afternoon. Then I spend the evening socialising with friends and family

Okay, all of the above **almost never happens**. Some of it does sometimes, but there are days when I wake late, eat breakfast in my pyjamas while logging onto my computer in bed. The activity break is me remembering to go and shower! Some days I don't manage to get out until 3pm – and then only to the corner shop – and on others I don't get out at all. I don't feel great when that happens, but I would be lying if I said there weren't any

days when I just work straight through from morning to evening without seeing daylight (especially in winter when days are short in Scotland) and lunch is leftover cake.

I don't, however, beat myself up if I'm not the perfect home worker. It's easy to feel anxious and that you are "doing it wrong" but eventually you learn to relax and go with the flow. So my top tips are:

- Don't think there is a "right way" to work from home. Everyone is different. Find what works for you. If you feel better for getting dressed for work that's fine. If some days you need to stay in your pyjamas or a cosy, comforting onesie with ears that's also fine. What matters is the work you do, not what you wear or indeed where you do it (maybe take off the ears before video conferences).
- Try to move regularly even if that is to different types of seats – an armchair or your sofa for a bit, standing at the kitchen counter and then back to your desk if you have one.
- Try to go out once a day and get some fresh air – if only to the back yard.
- Remember to eat and especially drink to stay hydrated.
- If you possibly can, switch off social media notifications and all the people trying to message you all day on WhatsApp, Signal, Slack, Instagram or whatever you use.
- Don't think you need to log on two hours before the usual start of the day and log off 2 hours after the end because that's your usual commuting time. Logging on a little earlier or off a little later is fine, but you aren't slacking if you have a little extra time to yourself.

Most of all – be kind to yourself during this difficult time.



Business Disability Forum is committed to ensuring that all its products and services are as accessible as possible to everyone. If you wish to discuss anything with regard to the accessibility of this document please contact us.

Business Disability Forum
Nutmeg House
60 Gainsford Street
London SE1 2NY

Tel: +44-(0)20-7403-3020
Fax: +44-(0)20-7403-0404
Email: enquiries@businessdisabilityforum.org.uk
Web: www.businessdisabilityforum.org.uk

Business Disability Forum is a company limited by guarantee with charitable objects.

Registered charity number: 1018463.

Registered Office: Nutmeg House, 60 Gainsford Street, London SE1 2NY.

Registered in England under Company Number: 2603700