

Helping smarter professional service firms grow

10½ tips that will help you manage yourself while working remotely

How can you do BD when you can't do BD?

Pt 4: Working from home

1. Set yourself goals

The secret to working remotely is getting organised. Create a 'to do' list (or better still 2 'to do' lists – priority and secondary) and make sure you jot down the deadlines next to each line to keep you on track.

2. Have a set workspace

Don't move around the house, set up a desk with all your gadgets, chargers, files and reference material in easy reach so that you know that once you're there, you're working.

3. Plan out your day

Know what you need to achieve before lunch and after lunch and know when you can call it a day. Having these short targets to work to is proven to make you more productive.

4. Improve your IT skills

As you'll be doing pretty much all of your work on a computer, you could use the extra time you'll have in the day to learn new IT skills.

You could get more familiar with new platforms like Zoom or Teams. You could find out which of the other apps in Microsoft 365 could help you become efficient. Or, it could be something more practical like learning how to fix any connectivity issues or what you need to do to speed up your PC.

5. Minimise likely distractions

Pets, TV and family members are just a few of the distractions we've all found in the 'new normal' so first off, you need to set your desk up in a room with no TV. Then make sure your family know when you're working so they can fit in around you (and you around them if you're sharing childcare duties).

And learn to shut the door. It's the simplest barrier.

6. Limit how many times you check emails

While staying connected is important, so is finishing the task/s at hand. Set time slots to read and answer emails and stick to them.

If you're worried about slipping out the loop, remember the working world is a little slower at the moment and if people need to speak to you now, they will ring you.

7. Take breaks

Getting up and moving around (or even getting out the house within the government's regulations) will help you mentally and physically and, as you'll return to your desk refreshed, it is also likely to increase both the quality of your work and your productivity.

8. Give yourself a reward

You are your own boss at the end of the day so why not reward your productivity with something you actually want? It could be a half hour break, a cup of tea and a biscuit, a dabble on social media, a bit of TV or even a quick game of something with someone else in your household.

9. Keep work time and personal time separate

You wouldn't drop your work to see to personal tasks if you were in the office so don't do it while you're working at home! If you do give yourself set breaks, that will give you the time you need to look after non-work things.

10. Keep in touch

This is by far the most important thing to do. Working alone at home is by definition a very solitary existence so make sure you are regularly talking to your colleagues, clients and contacts.

While this can be done by phone it's better to adopt a mix of communications. Try some of the free video conferencing apps available so you're actually seeing who you're talking to from time to time and use text messages and WhatsApp for more direct questions.

10½. Invest in some decent coffee

We may be working from home, we may even be in our trackie bottoms ... but we're not savages!



size 10½ boots

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