A decade ago, working from home on a daily basis sounded like an outlandish, foreign concept to many. Today, as the COVID-19 pandemic shifts a majority of the workforce to remote/online, many employees and managers find themselves adapting to a new office space—their home. This may include a dining room table, a home office or even their backyard deck on a sunny day!

The transition to telecommuting and working remotely over the past few weeks is quickly becoming the way of the future. Telecommuting presents a unique set of challenges for those who have never done it before, especially with the indefinite future of the pandemic and its effect of work and life.

The ability to work remotely is crucial as we navigate COVID-19, however many people are not sure how to work from home productively. There are several strategies one can utilize in order to maintain healthy habits and keep productivity in check while working remotely.
Below are some helpful tips and tricks to get your work done and stay healthy while working from home:

1. **Create a routine and stick to it!** One major benefit of being a remote worker is having the freedom to set your own hours. However, you still need to have the diligence and discipline to stick to your self-appointed schedule. What are you going to accomplish in the morning? When are you going to take breaks? Create and maintain a routine and schedule. It’s important to set an alarm clock, eat breakfast, take a shower and get yourself ready for the work day. A set schedule helps you work more efficiently as you’re less likely to wander off and put in a load of laundry if you know you’re on the clock, and this can lead to getting more work done in a shorter span of time. Sticking to a schedule helps you draw a clear line between your work time and your personal time.

2. **Have a dedicated workspace and set up.** It can be tempting to work from your bed, but it’s important to set restrictions when it comes to working remotely. If you find yourself easily distracted, you might be someone who needs to set firm boundaries when it comes to working from home. Try to find yourself a dedicated and comfortable spot to work that you can associate with your job and leave when you’re off the clock. It is important to set up a “desk area” where you will spend the majority of your day and set up with your laptop and other necessary office items.

3. **Set goals.** Write out a daily and weekly “to-do” list with both your work and personal tasks. Make sure to stay on track with the schedule and routine you have arranged for the day and the coming week. You will feel better prepared knowing what is ahead while also having a game plan for tackling these tasks and ultimately feel more accomplished once the tasks are completed.

4. **Exercise and stay active.** It can be tempting to work for hours at a time without taking a break, especially if you are comfortable in your working space. This is not good for your physical health, and definitely not good for mental health. You should periodically get up and move around your home to reduce or alleviate stress and increase endorphins. Maintain your discipline by adjusting your exercise routine to this new reality. Perhaps that means an afternoon walk outside, or a virtual spin class on your exercise bike at 6 AM; whatever works for you, it is very important to incorporate movement into your day!

5. **Stay connected.** Working from home can sometimes be isolating. Check-in with people often, even if you do not have a work-related reason. Schedule video calls whenever possible with your colleagues and teams. Virtual connections will never replace the importance of face-to-face interaction, but it can definitely help! Also make sure you are touching base with your supervisor and/or employees. Telecommuting thrives when there is an emphasis on trust and communication. Plus, regular check-ins with your team can help identify priorities and potential obstacles while also keeping people accountable.

6. **Know when to log off.** Shut down and stop working when you would normally leave the office (unless you are in busy season, or additional hours are required by your supervisor at this time). Just as you established your start time in the morning, determine when you’ll stop working in the evening. This can be very challenging to master in our 24/7, always connected world – but you will need a good work/life integration especially during these times.

7. **Stay informed.** Knowledge is power and it is beneficial to stay updated on the daily news and world updates. Stay informed on the latest updates from reliable and reputable sources like the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

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**We hope our team members are staying healthy and finding a remote working routine that works well for their mental health, productivity and work/life integration!**