

A Remote Worker's Guide to Balancing Home and Work

Balancing your home and career can be a challenge for any employee, especially when you live and work in the same space. How do you allocate your time between personal and professional responsibilities? How can you focus on conference calls when you're surrounded by dirty laundry?

Learn how to set priorities and reduce distractions whether you're new to remote working or you moved out of your cubicle years ago. Use these tips for staying peaceful and productive when you work from home.

Steps to Take by Yourself:

1. Follow a schedule. Set a start and end time for your day. Tackle your most challenging tasks during the hours when you're at your peak. When it's time to quit for the day, leave your job behind.
2. Design an office. Designate a separate space for business. It could be a whole room or a corner in your dining room. Decorate your space with pictures, art, and objects that you find inspirational and uplifting.
3. Change clothes. You may not want to wear a suit and tie but changing out of your pajamas will help you to feel more professional. Hang up your bath robe and get dressed each morning.
4. Limit distractions. Do you waste time watching TV or checking social media? Ban leisure activities during business hours except during break times.
5. Take breaks. Speaking of breaks, take them. You'll be more productive if you refresh your mind and body periodically.
6. Wind down. Do something at the end of each day to help you transition into an off-duty mindset. You might listen to classical music or take a walk in the park.
7. Get organized. Create routines and systems that encourage efficiency. Buy a cabinet for your office supplies. Use an online calendar to block out your time.
8. Continue learning. Career development matters whether you work at your dining room table or in a corner office. Take a course online or order a catalog for the adult education program at a local university. Read industry publications and general business news.
9. Evaluate your performance. Conduct your own job evaluations. Look for ways to increase quality, save time, and manage stress. Update your strategy as your goals evolve.

Steps to Take with Your Family, Friends and Colleagues:

1. Talk with your boss. It will be easier to balance your life when you and your boss agree on overall expectations. Negotiate the flexibility you need to succeed.
2. Post your hours. Ensure your boss and coworkers know the hours that you're available. Discuss arrangements for how to deal with emergencies that occur outside of those times.
3. Go out for lunch. Your midday meal is a daily opportunity to stay connected while you work at home. Plan a weekly date at a local cafe to catch up with your office friends or other employees who work from home.
4. Remain visible. Make business lunches and other events part of your strategy for cultivating your network. Show up at the office on a regular basis for staff meetings, birthday parties, and other gatherings. Volunteer at the local chapter of your professional association.
5. Pull together. A strong support network helps you to build your confidence and accomplish more. Ask your family and friends for the emotional and practical assistance you need. Let them know how much you appreciate them and pitch in when they need a hand too.

You don't have to give up life balance when you give up your commute. Enjoy more health and happiness by drawing sensible boundaries between your personal and professional activities.