

# The ultimate guide to remote work



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# Threats to your psyche and productivity

## Anna 2100 — dystopian vision of a remote worker

Anna 2100 is a 3D model created by British company Furniture at Work. “The model” is a result of analysis of scientific research and consultations with multiple medical experts. It was created to show the potentially disastrous effects of unreasonable and irresponsible remote work on the worker's body.





*Furniture at Work, Anna 2100*

As you can see, Anna 2100 is obese and stooped, the result of lack of exercise, inadequate diet and an unergonomic workstation. Her eyes are red from prolonged staring at screens, and her legs show enlarged veins. Anna 2100's immune system is weakened. The character also suffers from the onset of anxiety and depression.

Anna 2100 may seem like a highly exaggerated vision of a remote worker, but it's true that at least some of the ailments that afflict her, are developed by very real people who do not take proper care of their health. Remote work can negatively affect not only the physical sphere, but also our psyche.

## Remote work is not without its drawbacks. You don't have to be a fan of it

Despite the advantages of working remotely and many surveys showing that most people prefer this mode, home office can prove to be quite a challenge. Often, problems with remote work can appear only after some time, even several years.

Remember that:

- You don't have to like working remotely.
- You may have problems with this mode of work.
- You have the right to communicate this to your supervisor.
- You are not an inferior employee.
- You do not have to switch to a stationary job to regain your well-being, productivity and work-life balance.

## Harness the remote work

Learning how to function healthily in a remote work mode is all the more important because the home office has firmly established itself in the global market. Many companies no longer offer stationary cooperation and, in order to keep your position, you

sometimes have to accept a forced home office. Often, too, the search for a new job, associated with a salary increase or other desirable benefits, forces one to consider remote work offers in the first place.

## **First of all: self-awareness**

The solution to the problems that remote work generates begins with properly recognizing them. Often, people who are affected by a decline in their overall well-being for no apparent reason do not realize that aspects of remote work may be to blame. The same goes for trouble with effectively separating work and private life and several other issues.

**This section of the guide will help you learn about the most common problems that the remote work causes, increase your knowledge about them, and determine if they apply to you. Find your problem in the menu on the right. The next section will tell you how to deal with it.**

## **A sense of isolation and loneliness**

We are social beings. This means that we need constant interaction with others in order to function properly. Remote work deprives or severely limits regular contact with others, which can cause feelings of loneliness or separation from people and the outside world. Persistent isolation can develop into more serious mental health problems, such as depression or anxiety disorders.



*Annie Sprath, Unsplash.com*

Working remotely, we tend to have various online meetings and conversations, but these cannot fully replace live contact. Even such small interactions with others as giving way on a bus, buying a ticket at a kiosk or letting someone pass you in line for the coffee machine can have a positive impact on your mood. Remote work mode excludes such situations.

**Remember, if you feel lonely and isolated from the outside world, you can change that without losing your remote work. A lot depends on you.**



Learn how to combat the feelings of isolation and loneliness caused by remote work.

## Difficulties with work-life balance

Working remotely usually means working from home - a space associated with private life. Home is where we relax and spend time with loved ones. The home office brings the professional sphere into a private, intimate space. This can make it difficult to maintain a work-life balance.



*Christopher Lemerrier, Unsplash.com*



Working remotely takes away the ability to shed the stress of leaving the office and going home - to physically leave professional matters in another space. Even if an employee finishes work and turns off the computer, his thoughts can still revolve around work matters, and the accompanying stress can impede effective rest. Constant thoughts about work matters and proximity to the computer promote the practice of working beyond the norm, which can turn into workaholism or prevent effective rest in our own home. Possible consequences include deteriorating relationships with other household members, neglect of household chores, worse moods, and a decline in professional productivity.

**Remember that even in a remote working environment, you can learn to maintain a work-life balance and feel better. A lot depends on you. Learn how to develop habits that will allow you to separate your private and professional spheres.**

## Decrease in productivity

For some people, remote work may not be as effective as a stationary professional mode. Several factors cause a decline in productivity during the home office.

### **Lack of motivation to work and succumbing to distractions**

Remote work can reduce productivity due to work in a space that is not directly associated with work activities. Even if an employee works in a separate room, he is still close to places that serve and are associated with relaxation or entertainment, for example. The temptation to play a console, watch TV, or walk the dog while working

can be an effective distraction from performing duties. Working from home can be lazy. The lack of direct supervision from a boss or the presence of other co-workers doesn't help to reignite motivation either.



*Chris Lynch, Unsplash.com*

Home life also has an impact on lowering productivity. If an employee combines his duties with childcare or cannot effectively separate himself from the noises of play-time, neighbors' renovations, the dog's barking, etc., he loses the ability to focus.

**Remember, if you are struggling with yourself, getting tired, and unable to arouse and maintain sufficient motivation for home office work, you can still improve your condition and regain the efficiency of your**

activities without abandoning home office work. You also don't have to change your company or position if unwanted sounds and stimuli interfere with your effective remote work. Much is up to you.

Learn how to effectively motivate yourself in home office mode and perform your duties productively. Also, learn methods to combat various distractions.

## Difficulties with communication and teamwork

In many positions, daily work life includes effective teamwork or maintaining regular contact with co-workers or clients. In such professions, the home office mode is possible because of remote forms of contact, including telephone, chat rooms, and video messaging. However, there are situations when remote conversations cannot effectively replace live contact.



*Vitaly Gariev, Unsplash.com*

Teamwork through technology or remote communication can generate more conflicts, misunderstandings, or other barriers. These include the unreliability of technology (for example, application crashes or Internet outages) and the difficulty of effective collaboration between people in different time zones. Remote co-workers have fewer opportunities to spontaneously share their insights and organize brainstorming sessions.

Less effective teamwork or the quality of internal communication in home office teams can also be affected by less integration of co-workers. Taking on common challenges may not be as effective if our professional partners are just “icons on the monitor” to us and we know little about them. More close-knit and integrated teams are more effective and willing to help each other. More integrated employees are also much happier and more satisfied in the workplace.

**Remember, if you are experiencing difficulties with teamwork or communicating effectively with other employees remotely, you can solve these problems. Much depends on you. Find out what steps to take.**

## Sleep problems

Remote work can contribute to insomnia or other sleep disorders. Various factors generate such problems. Here are the most common ones:

### **Inability to separate work and private life**

When we work from home, the boundaries between work and leisure easily blur. This can lead to difficulties in “switching off” from work mode and make it difficult to relax and calm down before bed.



*Shane, Unsplash.com*

### **Work in the bedroom**

The bedroom is a space dedicated solely to rest. If we work from bed or our desk stands in the bedroom, we may constantly feel stress, tension, readiness, and other emotions associated with the professional sphere. At bedtime, it will effectively prevent us from well rest.

### **Lack of physical activity**

Sleep problems can also be caused by rarely leaving the house and not getting enough exercise.

## Exposure to screens

Looking at computer, tablet, or phone screens for long periods, especially in the evening, can interfere with the production of melatonin, the hormone responsible for regulating sleep.

## Stress and anxiety

Remote work, like any professional activity, can generate stress and anxiety. If there are too many such emotions, and the employee is unable to cope with them properly, various sleep problems can arise.

## Disturbed sleep rhythm

Remote workers who do not have fixed working hours and a regular daily routine, or who practice performing tasks in the evenings, may experience sleep problems.

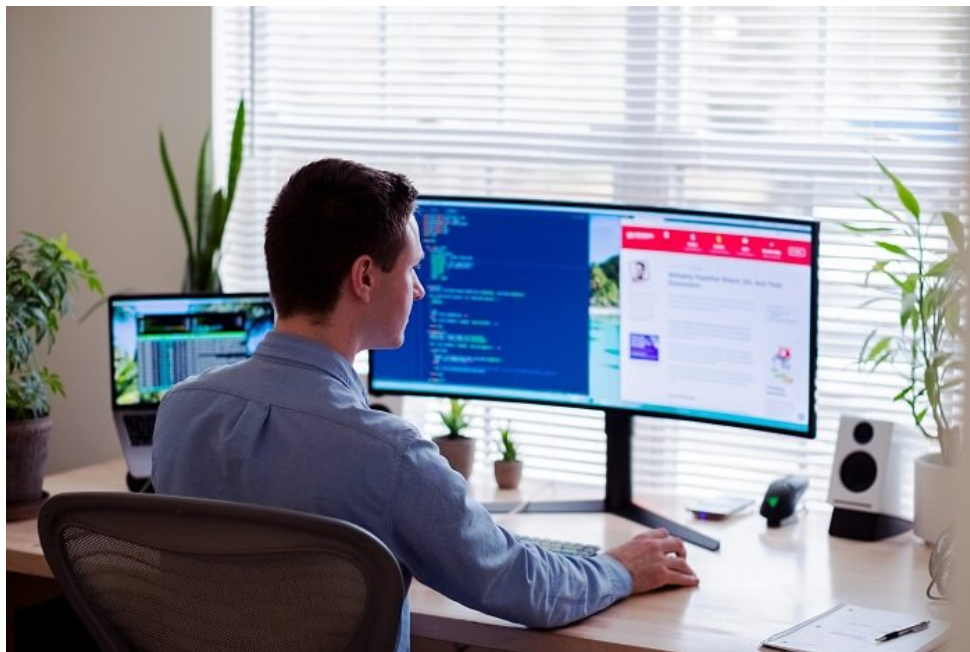
**If your insomnia is related to your work mode or you are experiencing other problems with deep, healthy, and effective sleep, there are several things you can implement to deal with that problem. A lot depends on you. Learn how to maintain healthy sleep while working remotely.**



# How to stay productive and healthy?

Every employee may experience various problems with remote work. This is not surprising. Home office is actually a very unnatural mode of work for us. The home space is not associated with the professional sphere.

Thankfully, **you don't have to change your current job right away** if you are affected by various problems related to its remote mode. Of course, it may be that the solutions collected in this guide will be insufficient and the only effective way that will remain is a change of employment. Nevertheless, there are many rules and habits, as well as other forms of self-help, that you can implement in order to successfully cope with all the difficulties of remote work.



*Luke Peters, Unsplash.com*



## My story

The company where I worked gave up renting a big office in the centre of Warsaw and decided to switch the mode of work for most departments to a remote one. I couldn't choose whether I wanted to work from home. One day I just had to clear out my desk and set it up again, but in my own apartment. The only alternative was to change my employer. I didn't want to look for a new job. I liked my current position and at first I also enjoyed the remote mode of it. It wasn't until about a year later that I realized something bad was happening to me. I didn't even notice how I gradually became less and less productive and locked myself in my apartment, stepping out of it less and less often and unable to clearly separate my work from my private life. My well-being and job satisfaction were decreasing. Then I started reading a lot about remote work and how it affects my psyche. I learned about and tested on myself many practical ways to maintain proper home office hygiene. I also underwent psychotherapy and developed the habit of exercising regularly.

This guide is not only a compendium of knowledge from current research on the impact of remote work on employees. It is also the fruit of my personal experience and my own struggle to develop well-being and job satisfaction. Therefore, **I know very well that it is possible to cope with many of the difficulties** that remote work causes.

**In this section of the guide you will find practical solutions to the most common problems of working in home office mode.**

## Find the root cause of your problems

The first step to solving remote work problems is to accurately identify them. If you already know what you want to work on, use the menu on the right. You will learn how to deal with the most common remote work problems.

**Use the additional materials I've collected** in this guide. Topics that are sure to interest you include, for example, how to effectively build new habits so they stay with you for the long term.

If you're not quite sure which remote work problem is affecting you, first familiarize yourself with the **“Threats to your psyche and productivity”** section. You'll find it in the menu on the right, as well. This section will help you identify issues you can work on to feel better. Come back to this section once you know what bothers you the most when working remotely.

## How do you combat feelings of loneliness and isolation?

### Talk to your team

You have many remote communication tools at your disposal. You can use the phone, chat rooms or video instant messaging. It's natural to talk about work matters, but to combat loneliness or isolation it can help to **have chats about personal topics as well**. Many remote workers set up separate communication channels on which they occasionally discuss current social issues or chat, perhaps only about

the weather. The idea is not to indulge in in-depth discussions during the time set aside for work duties, but to keep in touch with the team and feel part of it. Getting down to private topics helps you get closer. You can initiate the creation of such a channel.



*Surface, Unsplash.com*

## Participate in meetings

Many teams practice periodic video meetings to discuss current company and departmental issues. This allows employees to know what is going on in their workplace and team, and this fosters a sense of community. If you feel that such meetings are a good idea for you, put it up for discussion.

## Have an integration “live”

Many companies know that an integrated team is a more effective team, so they organize periodic stationary meetings for their employees. Team-building trips may take place once a year, but spending even a few moments with your co-workers in person can help you feel part of a particular group for much longer.

## Do not work from home

Working remotely most often means performing professional duties from your own home, but in the era of considerable popularity of home office mode, there are many places where you can sit down with your laptop and work quietly. These include, for example, some **coffee shops or coworking spaces**. Going to such places to work allows you to have the simplest of interactions with other people, such as when buying coffee or standing in line for the restroom. Being among people can help combat loneliness and isolation. This being said, try to find an alternative place to work remotely.

## Make up for it with your personal life

Remote work can naturally create a sense of loneliness or isolation. Since such a mode of employment necessarily limits taking daily interactions with others, you need to make up for it with your personal life. Maintain regular contact with family and friends. It may also be a good idea to enroll in a foreign language course, volunteer, use apps that connect people, attend meetings of a local literary enthusiasts' circle, or (after careful consideration of this decision!) adopt a dog from a shelter. All of these solutions boil down to finding ways to **be amongst people as often as possible during leisure time**, after working hours, which, by its remote mode, cannot provide such interactions.

## Learn to help yourself

Sometimes implementing the ideas mentioned above is not so easy. The team may not like the idea of regular meetings, and not everyone may be bold enough to start talking to co-workers about private matters or have the courage to join a group of new people themselves. An introverted nature or other obstacles can effectively prevent people from fighting feelings of loneliness and isolation on their own.

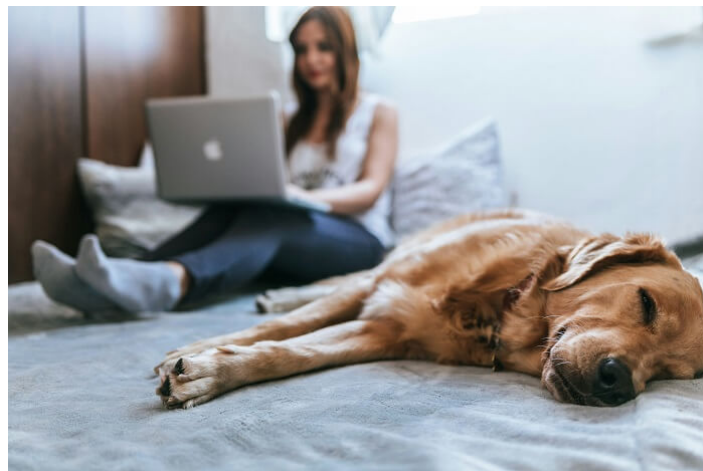
If you are plagued by bad moods and trying to deal with your emotions is not working, remember that you can help yourself by working with a professional. Keep in mind that loneliness or isolation often leads to more serious consequences, such as the onset of depression. Therefore, it is not worth to delay **asking for help from a psychologist or psychotherapist**. Working with a specialist helps you realize what

you need to feel better, break down your own barriers to achieve it and learn to work out satisficing solutions. This is an important investment in oneself. For more on psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy, see [this section of the guide](#).

## How to effectively separate work and private life while working from home?

### Work in a specially dedicated space

In order to effectively separate work and private life in a common home space, it is crucial to **dedicate a place, specifically a desk, that will be used exclusively for work**. Performing work duties from the couch or at the kitchen table or right from the bed is not the best idea. It is advisable that your workplace at home is separated from other part of the apartment that are used for relaxation, entertainment or housework.



*BRUNO CERVERA, Unsplash.com*

## Time only for work responsibilities

Even if we develop a space used exclusively for work, it is still very important not to succumb to any domestic distractions. We're talking about such temptations as, for example, the desire to put the laundry in while doing chores. It's one of the great advantages of the home office mode that small breaks can be used for just this and similar activities, but I don't recommend them if you have a problem with keeping your life and work space clearly separated. Use your work time exclusively for work, and leave private tasks for later. This is of course not to say that you should not take any breaks, but let them be unrelated to your private space. In moments of pause, for example, you can go out for a little walk, and not necessarily wash the bathroom.

## Strictly defined working hours

There is also no effective work-life boundary on a home office without clearly establishing fixed working hours. You don't have to work from 8am to 4pm every day if your company's policies don't demand it - your mode can be a bit more flexible, but nevertheless try to set yourself a strict time frame for performing your duties each day. Such a procedure not only helps to clearly separate professional and private life, but is also very good for work efficiency and productivity. A time frame for a given day, or even for specific duties, does not allow you to dilute your work for too long with too frequent interruptions or a sense of "I have time," but see the goal as "I have 2 hours left for this task."

**Set clear boundaries for your co-workers. If you work until 5 PM, do not answer phones after that time and do not check emails. Take advantage**



of various options to turn off or mute notifications in business apps that might bother you at a time when you no longer want to think about work.

## Remote work routine

A remote work routine also helps maintain a healthy work-life balance. We can incorporate into this not only fixed, well-defined hours for performing duties, but also meal breaks at similar times or rest in a familiar form, such as taking a walk. It is also good to **create for ourselves a ritual that we will associate precisely with the end of work** and the beginning of leisure time. This can be the aforementioned walk, going to the gym, moving to the couch, etc. When working from home, it's also a good idea to take care of such things as getting up a little earlier than five minutes before an appointment. Working in pyjamas is also not favourable for effectively separating the professional and private domains. Lying lazily in bed with a laptop is worth saving for a Sunday morning.

## Working remotely away from home

Another way to effectively separate the spheres dedicated to work and private life is to simply not work from home. Today, many remote workers use various **coworking spaces** or public places with satisfactory Internet connection, such as laptop-friendly cafes. Maybe once in a while it's worth working in just such a place?

## Effective relaxation

If you're following all of the tips listed above, but you're still tempted to fire up your work computer at a time when you're trying to relax, it's a good idea to simply practice effective relaxation. It is something that one also needs to learn. And you can do this. Find an activity that you enjoy and that really draws you in. Maybe it's some old passion abandoned long ago? Maybe you've always wanted to learn to play the guitar? Or maybe, in order not to think about work at home, you just need to go out somewhere, so find something you can do outside.

Various **relaxation techniques** can prove to be helpful. Meditation, yoga, mindfulness or breath training, listening to your favourite music - find what works best for you. Meditation, yoga, mindfulness or breath training, listening to your favourite music - find what works best for you. This is important especially if you're constantly under stress or think you are headed toward workaholism, and your loved ones tell you that you are neglecting them by overworking.

If you feel like you are overwhelmed by successful maintenance of a healthy work-life balance, do not hesitate to ask for help from a professional. A psychologist or psychotherapist are the people who can help you develop the right habits and boundaries. You can read more about psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy [here](#).

# How do you stay productive and motivated when working remotely and not succumb to home distractions?

## Mindful fight against distractions

One of the reasons for lower productivity in home office mode can sometimes be various distractions. These can be things related to your home space, such as the proximity of your favourite game console or TV with an addictive series, or notifications coming from various social media or annoying noises from outside of your window. When working remotely, it's definitely easier to browse Facebook for too long or extend a break to play the guitar. All because of the employee's lack of direct control in the form of a presence of other team members or a supervisor.



*Carl Heyerdahl, Unsplash.com*

The first step to fighting the temptation to give in to what distracts you from your work is self-awareness. Therefore, be vigilant, observe yourself, and in the beginning **even write down what distracts you**, what you succumb to most easily, and how much time it consumes. Once you know, for example, that you reach for your phone every time you hear a social media notification, fighting this unwanted habit will become much easier. You can simply turn off notifications for the duration of your work or leave your phone in another room.

If you find it difficult to work because your game console is in your line of sight, think about physically separating yourself from such a distractor. Also, move it to another room or position your desk so that no distractor is nearby.

If even that does not help and you are still closer to lying on the couch with a TV series for too long, consider working from a nearby coffee shop or coworking space. You can turn on the series there too, but it will be much more difficult - especially if you spend money to pay for such a place or buy coffee that is more expensive than that from your home coffee machine.

### **A way to deal with annoying noises**

A coffee shop or open coworking space may not be a good idea if you cannot maintain productivity amidst various noises. However, this problem can also affect you at home. If an extended renovation at your neighbour's house or work on the street down the block is something that knocks you out of your rhythm, it's worth getting good noise-cancelling headphones, earplugs or even investing in solutions like acoustic wallpaper. Since remote work is your *modus operandi* and you want it to stay with you for a long time, such an investment will pay off. You can always try to raise funds from your company's budget. I have had success with this. Many companies subsidize the home office of their employees.

## Internal and external motivation

Each employee may need different factors to arouse their motivation to work and keep them working remotely. Only **you yourself know best what would bolster your desire for high performance**. Think about it.

Sometimes it can be helpful to have a honest conversation with your supervisor. If you don't feel adequately appreciated, would like to take on an independent project, or think you should work more closely with your team, tell them. Ask for a meeting and talk about your concerns. You may be able to work out solutions together that will give you newfound supplies of fresh motivation.

There are a few universal factors that tend to bolster work motivation. They do not necessarily work for everyone, but you can try them out to see if they will help you either. It's good to know **the purpose and intended effect of your actions**. Performing duties without knowing what real business, reputational, or other benefits they will bring to the company, what they will give to the customer, etc. can sometimes be demotivating. No one wants to do things without a sense of their purpose. The same goes for knowing the progress of a project. It's good to see that the work is moving forward. Many people are also motivated to work by **the possibility of growth** - the realization that with each new task they are learning something new and expanding their own competence.

Many people feel well motivated to work as a team. If we are responsible for completing task A, without which it is impossible to complete task B, for which our teammate is already responsible for, it will come much easier to deal with our own obligations on time. What is more, working closely together, helping each other,

exchanging ideas and putting solutions up for discussion drives creative action and increases motivation to work. The solution, therefore, may be to strengthen cooperation with your team.

## **Organization of work time and tasks**

If you want to stay productive, plan your work time. Designate the hours you will work on a given day. Create your own routine for work and breaks and stick to that schedule. During this time, you can actually act as if you were in the office and not at home. Then your working hours will actually be different from your leisure hours, which, for example, you will no longer plan so meticulously and allow yourself for more slack.

- Plan your deadlines and the time needed to complete certain tasks as well. Set specific goals that you want to accomplish in a given day and week. Remember to make them realistic!
- Keep a to-do list and tick off each completed duty. This will give you the satisfaction of a completed duty and help you see your progress. This will also give you motivation to tackle the next task.
- Divide large, overwhelming projects into smaller tasks. The smaller the responsibilities involved, the easier it is to get on with them, and completing each one helps you tackle the next and see real progress.

In implementing such an organization of your own work, you will be helped by a simple paper notebook or programs created just for this purpose. You can use free versions that will keep your schedule in check.

Remember to always **focus exclusively on one task at a time** and only move on to the next task once it is completed. Don't get distracted by trying to perform several duties at the same time.

### **Pomodoro technique**

You can also try the pomodoro technique or create your own variation of it. It's a routine that consists of 25-minute stretches of intense work, during which you focus solely on the task at hand and don't succumb to any distractions. Such productive stretches of time are punctuated by 5-minute breaks, signalled by an audible alarm, during which you try to take a total break from your work. Several “sessions” of work and breaks are followed by a longer pause of, say, 20 minutes. The pomodoro technique is a way to not succumb to distractions, to set yourself up for maximum productivity at work, and to give yourself time to rest effectively.

### **Effectively rest and rewarding yourself**

Effective rest also plays a key role in maintaining productivity. No overworked employee can be truly productive. Therefore, be sure to take regular breaks and use them wisely. During your moments of respite, instead of checking what is out there on social media, give your eyes and body a rest. Get up from your desk and get out for some fresh air. You can also do some simple exercises to stretch your back, arm and leg muscles. Eat regular well-balanced meals (preferably every 3-4 hours). Avoid sugary snacks, which can make you feel sleepy, and drink plenty of water. Take your eyes off screens every hour, blink and look away for a few minutes.



Rewarding yourself can also help you stay motivated and productive when working remotely. Whenever you complete an important task or achieve a goal, appreciate yourself. Recognize that you conquered a difficult task and allow yourself a small reward. For example, it could be a break in the form of a short walk, going out for a delicious cup of coffee or watching an episode of your favourite TV series.

## How to nurture effective communication and teamwork?

### Facing conflicts

Wherever two or more people meet, different viewpoints, opinions, aspirations, etc., also meet, and thus conflicts arise. Disagreements are natural, and they also happen among teams that work stationary. In a remote working environment this is sometimes more difficult, but not impossible. If you have a problem with effective communication, which manifests itself in unpleasant situations, among other things, **accept that conflicts are natural and can be resolved**. First of all, talk to your co-workers. In situations of discord, it is better to use video communicators or the telephone, as talking only through written messages can cause us to misinterpret a colleague's words or face misunderstanding of our messages ourselves.



*Headway, Unsplash.com*

### **Learning to communicate effectively**

It is important to be able to openly communicate, to express one's feelings, concerns and motivations, but when necessary also to be able to admit a mistake, apologize and accept compromise. The ability to communicate effectively is crucial not only among remote workers, but in home office mode it becomes all the more important. That's why many companies organize various trainings and workshops to teach employees the soft skills necessary for teamwork. Plenty of organizations also have similar train-

ing courses in internal e-learning databases for their employees. You can use such resources or notify your supervisor of your desire to attend a training course on effective communication. You can also find plenty of materials on the Internet.

## Openness and transparent structure of the organization

To be part of a successful team, set an example with your own behaviour. Create a culture within the organization based on open and honest communication. Build trust by, among other things, sharing your knowledge, helping and involving colleagues in decision-making or brainstorming.

Solicit regular meetings with the team. Communication is better when leaders communicate what is going on in the company, and when information about the allocation of colleagues' responsibilities and current projects is public.

Many companies also maintain various organizational structure diagrams. Use such sources and you will find out who holds what position, reports to whom and what they do. This will make it easier for you to establish business contacts and effectively collaborate with other remote employees.

## Showing a human face

As a home office employee, you are nothing more than an icon on a monitor to others in your company. To facilitate communication you can become more “human”. It's a good idea to include a **brief description of yourself** in the communicator your organization uses. It can even be a link that takes you to a document with several pieces of information entwined with images. Try to make this form of presentation as “virulent” as possible, so do not write a long dissertation about what kind of person

you are, but limit yourself to a few useful facts about, for example, what kind of cooperation you like, what you are best at or what hours you are not to be bothered. Don't be afraid to also write here about what you like to do in your free time and show pictures with your family. A few facts about your private life will give some kind of an anchor to a person who needs to make contact with you for the first time.

## **The power of team-building meetings**

If you're having trouble with communication and remote teamwork, also push for “live” employee integrations. Many companies organize them periodically. Even one meeting in the real world and a joint, integrative activity is enough to make the team more united and more cooperative later on. Various online meetings, but not directly related to the professional sphere, can also be helpful. For example, you can draw or play a game of puns together.

## **Principles of communication and use of software applications**

For effective remote communication, it is also important to set rules for how you want to communicate with other employees. If you know that you're most productive between e.g. 11 AM and 3 PM, and the messages you're receiving or any call attempts with you at that time just annoy you, let everyone know that you'd rather they contact you during other hours. In your bio in remote communicators write whether you prefer email communication, phone or video calls. Do the same for your co-workers, ask them about their communication preferences too, and they will appreciate the respect you shown.

Remote work is supported by various tools. Take advantage of their benefits. Various dashboards, shared documents or other programs that help link the work of several people, contribute to the effective cooperation of teams working from different parts of the earth.

If your team consists of people living in different time zones, you must take this into account in any attempt to communicate. After all, you wouldn't want someone to call you in the middle of the night, would you? Every time, make sure you don't do the same. Set meeting times that are acceptable to all parties. Keep also in mind possible cultural differences and approach with tolerance and openness to other customs, such as greetings or farewells.

## **Proper conditions and tested equipment**

There is no effective remote communication and collaboration when the tools fail. Home office mode depends on a stable Internet connection and reliable hardware and software. Therefore, before you call someone, make sure you are not disturbed by any noise or external factors and test your microphone and headphones. Discovering problems with video, audio, presentation sharing or other application functions and dealing with them once the connection is established, will be annoying for both you and the other party. Do not let your co-worker's valuable time be wasted that way.

## **How to nurture a healthy sleeping routine?**

To minimize the risk of various sleep disorders or deal with insomnia already present, it is worth taking the following steps:

### **Establish a fixed schedule for work, leisure and sleeping hours.**

Sticking to a fairly consistent schedule, going to bed and getting up at a fairly consistent time, should help maintain a consistent daily routine and get your body used to responding appropriately (i.e., sleepiness at a particular hour, for example).



*Kate Stone Matheson, Unsplash.com*

### **Don't work in the bedroom**

The bedroom is a space associated exclusively with rest and relaxation. In order to ensure a healthy night's slumber, it is inadvisable to work from the bed or place a desk in this very room. It is even recommended not to have a workspace located

close to the bedroom or overlooking the bed.

### **Get out of the house and ensure adequate levels of physical activity**

If you are plagued by various sleeping problems, make sure you provide your body with a daily dose of exercise. Seldomly leaving the house and lack of any physical activity is a simple recipe for insomnia. Take care to take breaks in the form of regular walks. Find a form of sport that suits your preferences and needs. If you don't know how to start exercising wisely, consult a physical therapist or personal trainer. Consider signing up for regular sports classes in your area or play sports with someone else. You will then find it easier to get motivated

You can read more about the benevolent effects of physical activity on your health [in this section of the guide](#).

### **Avoid using electronic devices at least one hour before bedtime**

Exposure to screens before bedtime can cause problems with sleeping, therefore, at least one hour before bedtime, do not use your laptop, tablet or phone. Instead of an episode of a late-night show or browsing social media, develop the habit of reading a book, meditating, listening to quiet music or gently stretching your muscles. Find ways to chill out.

### **Practice various relaxation techniques**

Often it's excessive stress and anxiety that cause various sleeping problems, so take advantage of available relaxation techniques. You can do yoga, meditation, mindfulness, muscle stretching, listen to calm music, practice deep breathing, etc. Find the best method for you and learn how to effectively combat stress and anxiety.

**If you have trouble using relaxation techniques on a regular basis or they are not enough for you, consult a psychiatrist and psychotherapist.**



Perhaps properly selected medications and working with a specialist will help you. You can read more about psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy in this section of the guide.

# The advantages: enjoy working remotely!

Working remotely has many positives. I only list a few in this guide. I have chosen only those that I could relate to specific tasks for you. I'm sure that, when you carry them out, you'll be reminded anew of the good things about home office work and will be able to appreciate it more. It's great if you also feel the satisfaction of taking advantage of some of the possibilities offered by remote work.



*Brooke Cagle, Unsplash.com*

**However, only go to this part of the guide and the tasks posted here after implementing the tips and ways to combat the dark side of the remote work from the “How to stay productive and healthy?” section.**

If you try to force yourself to feel the joy of working remotely before you've learned how to deal with what's driving you down, you may alienate yourself for good from the content presented here or, what is worse, from any other source of self-help. After all, there's no point in telling a person who has just been dumped by a beloved partner that it's actually a good thing, because new social opportunities have just opened up for them. It's too early for them to see the advantages of such a situation.

## Flexibility and work-life balance

A great advantage of remote work is that it introduces flexibility to the employees day schedule. Thanks to the home office you don not need to use up your vacation days just to take care of some official matters or attend a doctor's appointment scheduled in the middle of work hours. Remote work allows for arranging your day flexibly enough to accommodate both 8 hours of work with other activities. This helps maintain a healthy balance between private and professional life, i.e.: work-life balance. Due to this remote work is the most appreciated by people raising children, who reconcile professional career with other life responsibilities or that simply like working at non-standard hours.



*LinkedIn Sales Solutions, Unsplash.com*

**Exercice for you: Use this advantage in practice to feel the satisfaction of working remotely. Plan your day flexibly and have a break for something nice.**

You can work for example starting from 8 AM to noon, then take a 2 hour long walk, go to the cinema or a restaurant, and then go back to your work duties. Do something that is pleasant for you and yet something that you could not do if you worked rigid hours in the office. Learn to benefit from the flexibility that the remote work gives you.

## No commuting

The most basic benefit of working remotely is no need to travel to your workplace. Often, working in an office means long, even over an hour long trip, being stuck in traffic or facing the unpleasantness of public transportation. Working from the comfort of your own home is a huge saver of time, energy and funds that would be otherwise be spent on fuel or tickets. This is one of the main advantages of the home office work mode.



*Persnickety Prints, Unsplash.com*

**Exercise for you: Feel the satisfaction of not needing to travel to the office.**

Imagine that you work in a company located in the most crowded office building in your area. It might be a neighbouring city or the centre of your town. Check how much time it would take you to get there during the morning rush hours and at what hour would you need to get out of bed. Write down that hour. Estimate how much money would you spend monthly for such daily trips. Write down that price. Imagine as well that you would also need to prepare yourself a meal for the next day at work. Your remote work has some advantages, doesn't it?

## Workation

A very attractive advantage of working remotely is the ability to work not only from your own home, but also from anywhere in the world. This is again an aspect that supports the so-called work-life balance. An employee doesn't have to take a vacation if they want, for example, to go visit their relatives for a week. They can work from their family home, and in their free time hang out with people dear to them.



*Humphrey Muleba, Unsplash.com*

The same is true if we dream of combining work and vacation. The same is true if we dream of combining work and vacation. The so-called workation means going to some attractive tourist place in the country or abroad, but with good Internet access and working conditions, and enjoying its charms at leisure time.

Working remotely not only allows for more mini-vacations per year than the stationary mode, but also enables one to practice the life of a digital nomad. This is a person who works remotely and travels regularly around the world, not actually having a single, permanent home. Digital nomads can even change the places where they sleep, work and explore the world on a weekly basis.

**Excercise for you: Go for a little workation!**

Find a place you'd like to visit. It doesn't have to be abroad, although, by all means, it can. However, remember to make sure you will have good Internet connection and a quiet place to work. Many Polish and foreign hotels, guesthouses or agritourism farms invite people to workation and create a friendly infrastructure for their guests to work.

Plan the attractions and activities you will enjoy when you turn off the computer.

Enjoy your workation!