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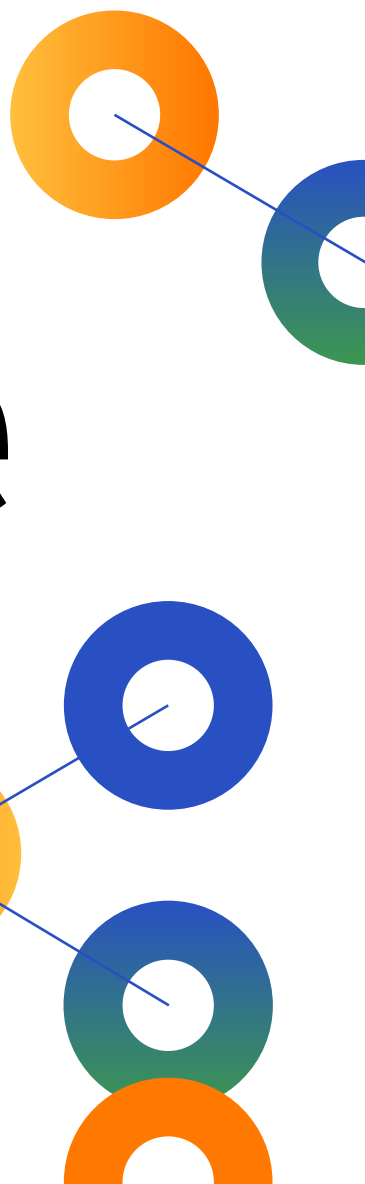
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# Work-from-Home Field Guide

How to help employees work  
healthier from home





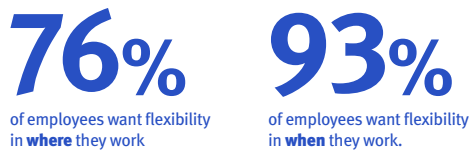
## **Work-from-Home Field Guide**

Enabling a productive and healthy workforce means supporting work wherever it happens, whether that's at home, in a co-working space, in a coffee shop, or even on a plane. While it's common for organizations to provide technology tools that allow employees to work from a variety of places, they don't always provide the support, guidance, or resources necessary to fully empower sustainable remote working. This field guide serves as a blueprint for business leaders as they steward their organizations along this journey.

**The COVID-19 pandemic** accelerated workplace trends that had been germinating for years. Chief among them as we look to the future is the reality that distributed work is here to stay. Flexibility has become a prerequisite for knowledge workers and job seekers around the globe.

Support for individual choice should be a key component of every workplace strategy. Organizations that embrace remote and distributed work in a way that bolsters their culture will ultimately empower their teams to create positive, healthy work experiences. Companies can benefit from nurturing a sense of autonomy among their people, as an equitable and inclusive environment is essential for a highly diverse workforce to thrive.

In the recent Future Forum Pulse survey



source: Future-Forum-Pulse-Report-October-2021.pdf



#### About our collaboration

**Herman Miller** has been researching the home and office for more than 90 years. In 1941, the company launched the Executive Office Group, designed by Gilbert Rohde. The design was promoted as “for home or office” and Herman Miller has been thinking about hybrid work since then.

**GitLab** is one of the world’s largest all-remote companies, with more than 1,350 team members across more than 65 countries. As the DevOps platform, the GitLab product fundamentally changes how teams work by bringing cross-team collaboration and communication into a single platform. The company documents and shares its lessons learned and proven methods on how to stabilize and scale a remote organization.

We’re just beginning to scratch the surface of the positive implications distributed work can have on **individuals**, their **organizations**, and **the world**. By bringing together the insights and expertise of Herman Miller and GitLab, we hope to inspire and guide leaders to make the best decisions about the future of work for their team and business.



## The role leaders play in healthy workspaces

➔ Whether an organization is hybrid or fully remote, it's up to company leaders to support all aspects of the employee experience. Just as you'd invest in your team's workspace in a co-located office, enabling them to create healthy and productive spaces outside the office is a core part of building your remote work infrastructure.

If you're a hybrid organization and an employee works remotely just two days a week, they've spent 40 percent of their work week without the ergonomic work settings that your office provides. Investing in an optimized workspace wherever your team is working leads to employee happiness, wellness, and engagement. Bonus: It also leads to better overall results for your business.

There's no "one size fits all" approach for a home workspace, because each member of your team has different needs, work preferences, and home environments. To be most inclusive and equitable, consider providing a budget for your team to spend on their own, whether it's for their home workspace, a coworking space, or even equipment needed to be productive on the go.



At GitLab, team members are allowed to spend company money as they would their own, with cost guidance provided for various types of equipment. Keep in mind that team members' needs may change as they experiment to find their ideal work environment.



In the recent GitLab Remote Work Report,

# 82%

of workers praised their leadership for understanding how to operate a team remotely.

source: remote-work-report-2021.pdf



## Your many spaces for work

➔ Having one singular space for work is a thing of the past. We have many choices for where to work on a given day: your home office or kitchen counter, a coffee shop, a coworking space, even a car or plane. No matter where work gets done, it's important to be intentional about how you use these spaces.

One of the key skills needed for success in a hybrid or remote setting is being a **“manager of one”**, no matter your job title or level. “Managers of one” are able to work toward their goals and get things done without constant oversight from others. This self-leadership extends beyond just setting your daily priorities; it gives you the autonomy to rethink what type of physical environment is most productive for you.

When planning your work experience, consider a range of primary, secondary, and on-the-go spaces. Regardless of where you work, these two questions can help make sure your various workspaces complement each other:



1. Why do I choose to work where I do and what might prompt me to move to a different space?

2. What are the tools I need to do my best work, can I take them with me to a different space, and will I have a place to set them up once I get there?



Let's take a look at primary, secondary, and on-the-go workspaces and how they can be used for different types of work:

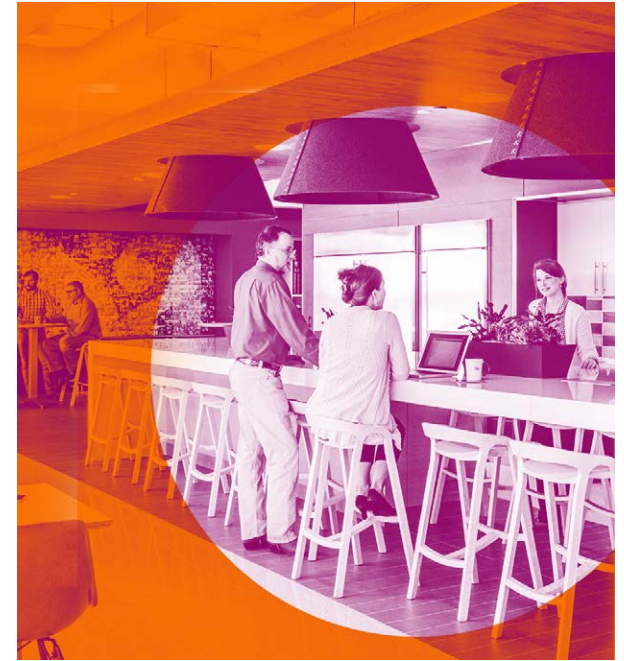
**Primary workspace**  
(home office, company office, dedicated desk)

**Great for:** Deep, focused work where you need secondary screens, specialized tools, or controlled conditions for important video calls, etc.



**Secondary spaces**  
(coworking space, cafe, kitchen counter, dining table, porch)

**Great for:** Re-energizing your mind with coffee chats, 1:1s, virtual learning and development, etc.



**On-the-go spaces**  
(walking meetings, rideshare, mass transit, waiting areas)

**Great for:** Cognitively light work and fitting in bursts of productivity between other demands.



## Cultivating inclusive work experiences

➔ Supporting a highly diverse workforce through improved employee experiences is top of mind for leaders seeking to attract and retain top talent. Being intentional about supporting remote and hybrid work can be a differentiator for these efforts.

By enabling your team to work outside a co-located office, your organization will be more **inclusive** of groups like parents, those caring for family members, those who are neurodiverse, and those who have varying physical abilities. Your team members will not be disadvantaged for needing specific workspace setups or not being able to commute to an office every day. This all contributes to creating what GitLab calls a **non-judgmental culture**.

To help employees take full advantage of the flexibility offered by remote and hybrid working, organizations must ensure that each team member has designed for themselves an appropriate range of spaces to support their work activities throughout a work week. Instead of simply working around the existing elements of their dwelling—spending all day at the kitchen table or on the sofa—employees should be encouraged to think about how their work processes could be better supported by a greater range of spaces within and beyond their homes. As “managers of one,” they should be proactive in fully accommodating their own set of unique needs and work styles.

In the recent GitLab Remote Work Report,

# 61%

of remote workers feel that their company took meaningful actions toward increasing team diversity, inclusion, and belonging in the past year.

source: remote-work-report-2021.pdf



## Beyond the desk: Health, wellness, and your workspace

➔ Working from home, like any office, can have benefits and barriers. The biggest barrier to successfully working from home is designating space—physically and mentally—that helps establish boundaries for yourself and others. Whether in a studio apartment at the kitchen table or a house with a dedicated work room, it's important to create space that helps you remain engaged and productive.

These 5 tips will help guide you in establishing a work-from-home experience that supports your overall wellbeing and contributes to you doing your best work.



In the recent GitLab Remote Work Report,

# 42%

of respondents admit that they struggle with maintaining boundaries while working away from the office.

source: remote-work-report-2021.pdf



### 01. Adjust your workspace

**Set up an ergonomic work environment.**

This will help prevent musculoskeletal disorders that can occur when working on a laptop for long periods of time, and it will increase cognitive engagement. Consider things such as natural light and views, an ergonomic chair, and placing computer screens at eye level and work tools and resources within reach.



### 02. Adjust your technology

Stay sharp when working with digital tools. Get familiar with the current apps for connecting with your team and ensure the software is up to date. Arrange the camera, light, and background to share your best image, keeping doors and common living areas out of sight to minimize on-screen distractions. It's also a good idea to run system checks on your audio and video before important meetings. Finally, make sure your back is supported while seated, and avoid leaning forward into the screen.



### 03. Communicate your needs

Consider your needs for doing your best work. Communicate them to your workmates, but also any family, friends, or housemates that may be sharing your space. Don't forget to honor your own needs.



### 04. Commit to your outcomes

Establish work priorities and touch points. Some people prefer an early jumpstart on the day and others enjoy a later start. When you commit to work outcomes over a work schedule you can deliver them based on your personal preferences.



### 05. Commit to your health

Recharge your mind, body, and spirit. Take time for breaks that allow you to exercise, get outdoors, connect with friends, meditate, daydream or simply enjoy meals without the presence of a digital device.

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Embracing the full autonomy of flexible work means the freedom to reimagine your routine, throw out old habits, and **prevent burnout**. Experiment with what GitLab calls a **non-linear workday**, for example. This allows you to rethink what your life could look like, shaping your work around your life, not the other way around.





## Ready to learn more?



For more insight and best practices for building remote teams, check out GitLab's complete [Guide to Remote Work](#).

GitLab is The DevOps Platform that empowers organizations to maximize the overall return on software development by delivering software faster, more efficiently, while strengthening security and compliance.

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For Herman Miller's latest insights on the dynamics that are reshaping work today, check out their [Future of Work hub](#).

A foundational belief in human-centered design has guided Herman Miller for the better part of a century. The company's imperative is to address complex problems with the simplest, most beautiful possible solution. Doing so in partnership with the brightest design minds of our time, Herman Miller has led the field in authoring original, timeless solutions that make an enduring impact. Herman Miller is part of the MillerKnoll collective.

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