

# Essential Tips for Your New Remote Home Office



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So you've been given the opportunity to work remotely - welcome to the club! You might be asking yourself, 'Now what?' Well, to be totally honest, working from home doesn't mean lounging on the sofa all day watching Netflix - like many think it does. It's actually in ways, much *harder* than working in an office environment because you need self-discipline, self-motivation, and time management skills to get things accomplished without your manager looking over your shoulder. You need to thrive with autonomy and most times, you actually end up working *longer* hours since you have access to your home office 24 hours per day.

But, the benefits of working from home are obvious. If you're a regular employee, you skip the commute and there are no office distractions for the day. If you're an entrepreneur, you have reduced overheads, no commuting and a congenial working environment. It takes a bit of planning and work to get the perfect home office, though. And - everyone is different.

At [Today's Local Media](#), we have a fully distributed team of full-timers, contractors, freelancers, designers and developers that work all across the globe. And we've put together a list of the must-knows and must-haves in order to be successful while working from home.

## Where you work remotely matters

Think working in a coffee shop sounds idealistic? Think again. While you might be looking for a change of scenery from your regular home office, working from a bustling coffee shop is a *very* different experience.

For starters, it's distracting. Love people watching? Perfect. You'll most likely be spending the majority of your time watching the other patrons instead of focusing on your own work since you'll have an endless supply of hilarious and awkward encounters take place right in front of you throughout the day. It's also extremely noisy. From conversations to crashing cups and plates to music playing through the speakers, if you're someone that needs quiet to focus, this is not the place for you. Which also brings me to video calls - the last thing your manager or team wants to see or hear is someone spill coffee on themselves behind you. What's distracting for you will also be distracting for them - leading to less productivity.

But apart from all of the distractions, there are some other important factors to consider as well:

- The WiFi isn't guaranteed to work and if it does, think of all the other people connected to it - drastically slowing it down
- You can't bring your external monitor with you since there will be no place to put it
- Electric sockets for your charger are a luxury and competitive to find
- If you go alone and need to step out to make a phone call or use the restroom, you better be prepared to pack up all of your belongings and risk losing your seat since you have no one there to keep an eye on your things for you - or leave them and risk someone swiping something when you're not looking!

See how *un-idealistic* that actually sounds? While coffee shops can be great for a short change of scenery or to quickly answer emails, working from your real home office is the better option for when you want to hunker down and focus. Here's why:

## Your home office is *yours*

While lounging on the couch with your feet up can be the perfect way to catch up on Slack messages, you should really dedicate space *away* from where you watch TV, sleep and eat to get work done in solitude. This way, you're free from distractions and temptations and you can set up and design your space however *you* want. And if you're someone who likes to work late into the night, you can do so without bothering your roommates or family members.



Photo by Dillon Shook on Unsplash

But where to start? You need a desk, obviously. But what else? We've asked our team of remote workers for the top things they can't live without and have shared them below:

- **Standing desk.** One thing you'll lose while working from home is the ability to stand up and stretch your legs to walk across the office for meetings or to meet up with your coworker for a quick chat. While you may think you'll still get those steps in, chances are you're not going to pace around your house all day. So investing in a standing desk that can be raised and lowered will be good for your back, hips and overall health (don't forget a mat to stand on too)!
- **A good chair.** The more you sit, the more you slouch - putting strain on your neck and back. So make sure to pick up a good, ergonomic chair that will support your posture, weight and lumbar while sitting.

- **Office supplies.** Just because you aren't in a real office doesn't mean you don't need office supplies. Stock up on pens, notepads, a stapler, a printer, a filing cabinet and more to make sure you're ready and organized for anything.
- **External monitor.** Why? Because who wants to stare at a tiny laptop screen all day?
- **Bluetooth keyboard and mouse.** These are great for setting them in the position that's perfect for your range of motion and height.
- **Floating shelves.** Need a place to put that cute photo of your dog? Or a place to keep some books on hand? Floating shelves are a great option because they not only look good, but they leave space on the floor as well.
- **Cable organizers.** You're going to need both your computer and phone charger throughout the day so instead of crawling underneath your desk every time you need a plug-in, pick up a cable organizer that attaches to your desk and keeps your chargers in place.
- **Reusable water bottle.** Stay hydrated! It's easy to get lost in your work so keep a water bottle handy to sip on while you focus.
- **Healthy snacks.** A lot of the time, being home all day can lead to unnecessary snacking. So if you're going to snack, make it healthy and avoid the chips and candy.
- **Pet bed.** Have a dog or cat that is super clingy? Place a pet bed in the corner so they can be close to you without being on top of you.
- **Decor.** This is *your* space. Decorate it in a way that speaks to you, makes you happy and makes you want to be in there. But remember, keep anything flashy out of the line of sight for video calls.

Your home office is yours to do what you please with and everyone is different. But having these essential items from the start will set you up for success.

So you've been on your computer for 15 hours



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Now that you've got the perfect space set up to crush work, it's time to set some boundaries for yourself. Like I said before, working from home a lot of the time means working longer hours since you have access to your computer and necessary documents 24/7. But that doesn't mean you should put in those crazy hours every single day. It's important to set some rules:

- **Set regular working hours.** Whether you prefer to work early in the morning, during the regular business day or late at night, establish working hours and stick to them. Once you are 'logged off' for the day, disable notifications. Most remote teams are comprised of teammates across the globe in different time zones - so it's easy for them to forget that just because they are working right now doesn't mean you are too. As long as you make your scheduled meetings and nothing is a crisis or urgent, turn off your notifications so you're not tempted to work 24/7.
- **Say yes.** Whether it's to grab lunch or a quick coffee, say yes. It's difficult sitting alone for eight hours a day without the natural banter of the office, so you have to put that extra bit of effort into your social life to balance it out.

- **Exercise.** Without the daily commute or walk to the conference room, your activity level while working at home is limited. Make sure to carve time out during the day to get some exercise in. Whether it's first thing in the morning, during your lunch break or late at night, get active!
- **Take lunch.** Speaking of lunch breaks, you need to actually take one. While it's tempting and easy to just eat while you work, stepping away from your computer and taking a real break to recharge is key.

## Working from home - optimized

When it comes to working from home, it's easy to get lost in your work and neglect your workspace. But by spending the extra time and money on making it comfortable and accessible, you will make a huge difference to your productivity, creativity and most importantly, your happiness. And by setting boundaries and rules for yourself, you will be less likely to burn out.

A handful of small changes can revolutionize your remote working experience. Whether you go get yourself some productivity-boosting tools, or completely revamp the look of your space, choosing to optimize your home office is the undervalued secret to optimized remote working.