



6 working from home tips

6 working from home tips from a remote work expert

Sonya Strachan is a technical underwriter for MetLife in Australia who works from home full time and has a young family. Here she shares her tips for working remotely and effectively.

1. Build relationships without 'face-to-face' contact

People working from home for the first time are often unprepared for how isolating it can be. It's easy in the office when you can walk up to somebody and say, "Hey, how's that thing that I need?". It's harder from home if people have never seen your face. Go out of your way to remind people you exist and be proactive in maintaining relationships with your peers.



2. Check in with people

Reach out through Skype (or whatever technology you have) to check in on people and see how they're tracking. Have virtual chats, coffees or lunches. Even if it means the other person sees you with food dripping down your shirt. Dropping personal snippets into conversations also helps.



3. Take breaks

It's often hard to know when to stop working when you're working from home. People often feel they need to be at their computer all day and feel guilty about having personal conversations in company hours. But team bonding is important for your emotional and mental well-being. Your colleagues aren't robots and at the moment everyone is in the same situation. Reaching out to your colleagues doesn't mean you're not getting your work done. Set a time limit or a task to achieve, then stop. Work will still be there tomorrow.



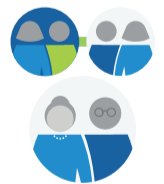
4. Bring your whole self to working from home

When everyone started working from home, we had a WebEx (video meeting) where everyone showed their work-at-home environment and we chatted about what we did on the weekend, just to establish that social connection. It was a really positive thing to do. People may feel pressure to keep their house tidy but anybody at home – with or without kids – needs to understand their house will look like a cyclone went through it sometimes. And that's okay.



5. Don't ignore the people in your life

Don't worry that your family or housemates will be around while you're on calls. And don't feel you can't take time to engage with them. When you're in the office you go for coffees with colleagues. Don't be afraid to take that time at home.



6. Think of the positives

We're lucky enough to live in a world where working remotely and remaining connected is possible even though you might not be in the same room. There are people in many industries who don't have the same luxury.



Working from home cheat-sheet

- Get up and get dressed as if you're going into the office.
- Have a comfortable, dedicated workspace that's set up with the right technology. Try not to work from the lounge as it's not good for posture or productivity.
- Walk to work in the morning by walking around the block.
- Make a coffee (or chosen beverage) each morning, take it into the office and shut the door.
- Have a to-do list to set you up for the day and help you stay focused.
- Have a lunch break and don't eat at your desk.
- Get up, move around, and stretch regularly.