

# Tips for working from home

Working from home can be challenging at the best of times. The transition from our familiar cubicles to our home offices can take some getting used to, and the degree of distraction varies from household to household.

Here are some tips and tricks that will help you to stay calm, cool and collected in your new office environment.



## Your home office environment

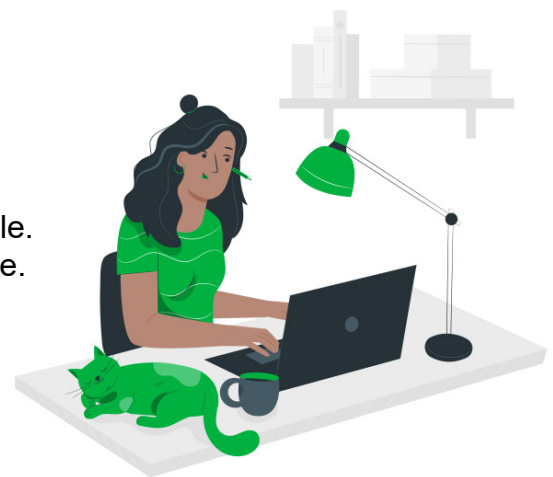


### The power of routine

Deciding you'll sit down at your desk and start work at a certain time is a good start. Creating a routine that guides you into the chair is a *great* start. Incorporating a morning routine sends a message to your brain that you're about to start work. It might be as simple as making a cup of coffee. It might be a morning walk. It might be getting dressed (*wearing pajama pants is comfortable, but we aren't used to working in them*). It might be saying good morning to a colleague that you normally greet in the office. A routine can be more powerful than a clock at helping you get started each day.

### Keep a dedicated office space

In an ideal world, remote employees would have a dedicated office, free of distraction. In the real world, it's not always feasible. Dedicate a desk or table and some peripherals only for work use. For example, turning on a certain lamp indicates it's work time.

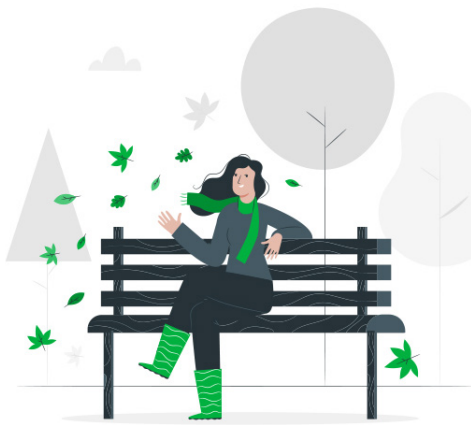


### Your laptop does not belong on your lap!

Though the name of the tool "laptop" implies you should place it on top of your lap, this can be harmful if done for prolonged periods of time. If you don't have a home-office with a desk, use your kitchen table. Kitchen too distracting? Use a laptop table. Don't have one? Use an empty binder or an empty shoe-box.

## Set ground rules with the people in your space

Many of us share a space with others in our home – whether it's family or fur-babies (*pets*). If you have children, they need clear rules about what they can and cannot do during certain hours. Being home might allow you to let service people into the house or take care of pets. Be careful not to let others assume you will always do it. Clear communication in how you choose to divide the domestic labour is key.

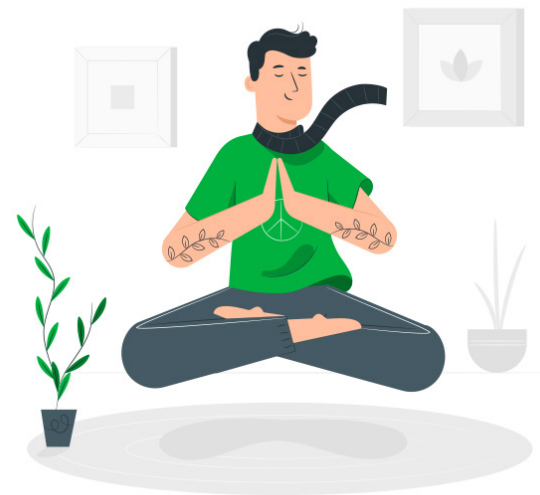


## Clean air = happy lungs

Diffusers and de-humidifiers are great tools to have around when you want to purify the air you're breathing. Humid air clings to stale particles of airborne dust, and weighs them down to the floor – preventing you from inhaling them into your lungs. Adding a few drops of essential oils can help to relieve stress and anxiety. If you don't have a diffuser or dehumidifier, boil some water and add a few drops of essential oils. Or crack a window open! Studies have shown natural direct sunlight is correlated with a decrease in airborne bacteria. Even if it's too chilly, open up the blinds and let the sun shine into your home to refresh the air.

## End your day with a routine

Just as you should start your day with a routine, create a habit that signals the close of the workday. After turning off your computer, go for an evening walk, take an online yoga class, or listen to your favorite podcast (*and give your eyes a break from the screen*). Whatever you choose, do it consistently to mark the end of working hours.

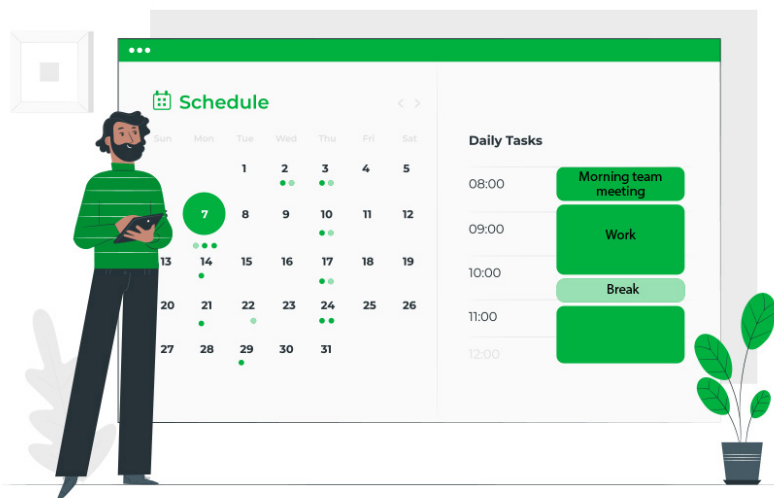


## Managing your time



## Maintain regular hours

Set a schedule, and do your best to stick to it. Setting clear guidelines for yourself regarding when to work and when to call it a day will help maintain work-life balance. That said, one of the benefits of remote work is flexibility, and sometimes you need to extend your day or start early. Inform your manager and team if this is the case.



## Schedule breaks, and take breaks in their entirety

Giving yourself adequate time during the day to walk away from the computer screen and phone is key. Don't short-change yourself during breaks, especially on your lunch. We don't have the luxury of our colleagues reminding us when it's lunchtime, so set a recurring reminder notification in Outlook. If you notice you return to work before then end of your scheduled break, be sure to walk away for the remainder of the time.

## Connecting with B&M



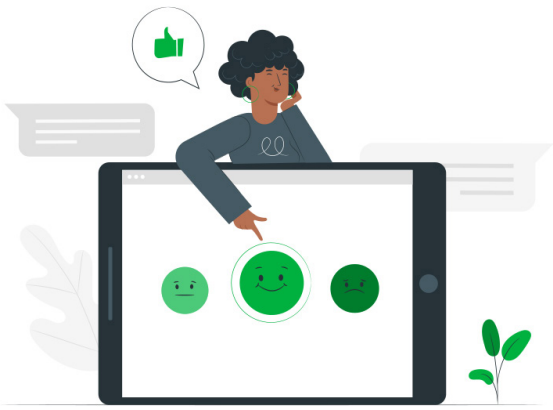
### Socialize with colleagues

Loneliness, disconnect, and isolation are common hurdles in remote work life, especially for extroverts, so we must be more proactive and nurture relationships. Pick up the phone and call a colleague. It's important to figure out how much interaction you need to feel connected and included. Even if you're highly introverted and don't like socializing, give a few interactive experiences a try so that you're familiar with them if you ever decide you want them. Remember – we're all in this together!



### Show up to meetings and be heard

Certainly, you'll take part in online meetings and conference calls, but it's a good idea to attend optional meetings sometimes, too. Be sure to speak up during the meeting so everyone knows you're on the call. Introduce yourself at the start of the meeting, share your opinion throughout, and ask questions if anything is unclear. This will go a long way toward getting the most out of the online meeting.



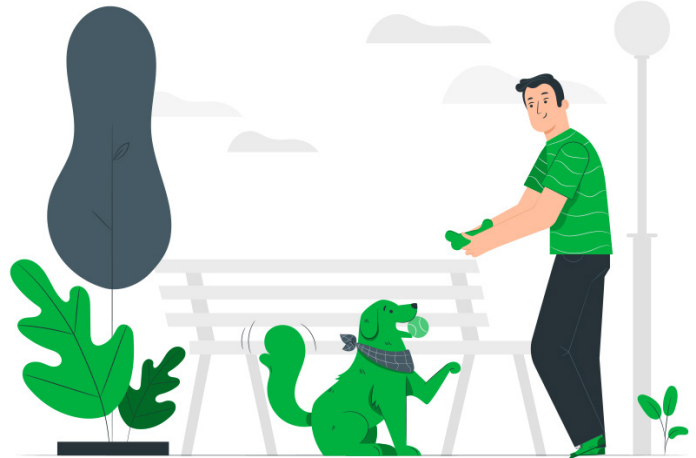
### Be positive

The less face time we have, the less others know how to interpret tone. When you work remotely, you must be positive, to the point where it may feel like you're being overly positive. So embrace the exclamation point! Find your favorite emoji :D. You're going to need them.

## Mental health management

### Leave home

Try to leave your home or work space regularly. The same advice applies to people who work in traditional office settings, too. Leave the building at least once a day. Your body needs to move. Plus, the fresh air and natural light will do you good.



### Don't be too hard on yourself

The most successful remote employees have a reputation for being extremely disciplined. After all, it takes serious focus to do any full-time office job from an unconventional space. That said, everyone lets their attention drift sometimes. If you find yourself working one minute and being distracted the next, don't reprimand yourself too harshly. Instead, ask yourself whether people in an office setting do the same thing. If the answer is yes, cut yourself some slack, then get back to work.

### Limit social media use and news articles

We are all being inundated with messaging coming from multiple directions. Though we are curious, and social media disseminates information quicker than ever, digesting new information under new circumstances is not easy. Consider limiting your exposure to news and social media. Why not decide on a specific time to check in with the news? Avoid getting caught in the whirlwind of misinformation and stick to trusted sources of information such as the [WHO](#), [PHAC](#) and [Health Canada](#) websites.





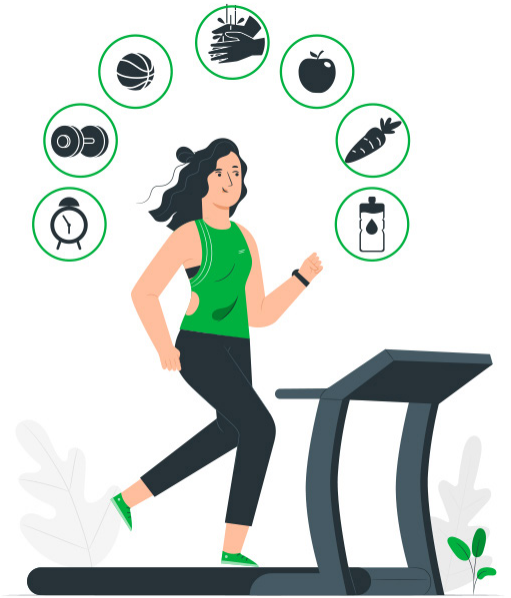


### Keep busy

When you're not working, do some spring cleaning, cupboard organizing, and closet purging! All of those things you've wanted to do, but have never gotten around to. Don't feel like cleaning? Read a book, do some colouring, play a board game, or do a puzzle.

### Stay active and healthy

Not leaving the house to travel to work results in a very sedentary lifestyle. It's important to remain active to maintain our serotonin levels (*the happy hormone*). Go for a walk or jog, ride a bicycle, or do some jumping jacks! There are plenty of at-home-workout videos accessible on YouTube – check it out! Remember to eat a healthy snack, like fruit or vegetables every few hours to stay energized, and don't forget to drink water!



### Seek help

Times of uncertainty can lead to increased levels of anxiety. Seeking additional help when you need it is the right thing to do. Our **Employee and Family Assistance Program (Workplace Options)** can make an instrumental difference in getting you and your family through these tumultuous times.

Phone: 877-847-4525

email: [support@resourcesforyourlife.com](mailto:support@resourcesforyourlife.com)

Web: <http://ca.resourcesforyourlife.com>

Company code: BMWeCare

## Helpful articles

[Coronavirus: How to protect your mental health](#)

[7 ways to relieve anxiety when all you can think about is Coronavirus](#)

[17 important tips for anyone who's working from home during the Coronavirus outbreak](#)