



Self-organisation in the home office

WORKING FROM HOME TODAY

WE'VE GOT FOUR SELF-ORGANISATION TIPS FOR YOU

HOW TO MAKE SURE YOU AND YOUR WORK ARE WELL ORGANISED

The concept of new work has been postulated in business for some years now, referring to a more flexible and independent way of working that isn't location-specific. Now, the future scenario has become reality more quickly than we thought: as of March 2020 lots of people have started working from home, to protect their own health and contain the spread of the coronavirus. The fact that businesses are able to carry on operating anyway, at least for the most part, is the huge benefit of digitisation. Nevertheless, the abrupt shift into the Home Office is a challenge for more than a few of us. Firms have to sort out the necessary hardware and software rapidly, and employees have to settle into their new situation as fast as possible, whilst becoming accustomed to using new technology in some cases. With maximum efficiency, of course.

"I'll just quickly put the laundry on": knowing the pitfalls ... and avoiding them

There are more productivity traps lurking at home than there are in the office. Being aware of them is the first step to a successful working day. In this current phase there's probably a "productivity brake" that

would otherwise be a huge source of enjoyment and precious moments: your child or children. The thing is, they're likely to be at home right now as well. If the kids are old enough, you can create a daily schedule for them (maybe in cooperation with your emergency childcare provider). This ensures that work and leisure times are decided in advance, with a clear definition for everyone.

Rule 1: Everything according to plan

Once you have drawn up a timetable of activities with your family or children, you can then turn your attention to your own daily schedule. Maybe it will be oriented to the tasks you need to get done, possibly phone or video conferences in which responsibilities are allocated. The exact detail of your plan is not important: it's meant to help you set the correct priorities and remember the essentials. Another thing that's very helpful is to define a goal and achieve it. Then when it's time to knock off, whenever that might be, you feel as though you deserve a rest.



Rule 2: Defining your working hours and sticking to them

When you work at home, the boundaries between work and your private life are blurred all of a sudden. If you don't have to liaise with colleagues or ensure that you can be reached by customers, you can get your work done when you're at your most productive. However to ensure that you're able to switch off again, it's a good idea to define your working hours clearly. Avoid just popping to do the laundry or running the Hoover round quickly when you're supposed to be at work. And conversely you don't want to be firing off a quick email from the sofa while the kids are playing. It's a more relaxed work-life model. Which brings us to the next theme already: your workstation.

A few productivity rules

- + Make plans (and be prepared to discard them)
- + Define your working hours and stick to them
- + Keep work separate from your private life
- + Concentrate on the matter in hand: minimise distractions

Rule 3: Creating a workstation

Create a place specifically for work. If you don't have a separate study or office, define a different place that's reserved for your home office work – and it shouldn't be the sofa, because that's meant for relaxing! Even if you don't use a desk that's height-adjustable, at the very least a chair that can be adjusted in height to suit your needs will provide you with an ergonomic workstation.



Rule 4: Don't get distracted

It isn't just kids who can potentially be a(n un)welcome distraction in your home office, there are also noises, emails, messages, phone calls, pets, or things that you think urgently need doing around the

house. It's rumoured that multitasking doesn't really work, because it takes you 20 minutes to become fully refocused after checking emails, for example.

So what can you do to make sure your jobs are done as efficiently and quickly as possible?

- + Start the day with a tidy desk.
- + Make sure you minimise environmental noise.
- + Define times for emails and don't check them non-stop.
- + Put your mobile phone away too, unless you're expecting an important call.

The ideal working rhythm incidentally is 52-17. Focused work for 52 minutes followed by a 17-minute break, at least that's what studies have found. Maybe you can use this time to play with the children and exercise in the fresh air ... or you could put the washing on.

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