



THE ULTIMATE REMOTE WORK GUIDE

Your guide to successful, professional
work from a home office

SO, YOU'RE WORKING FROM HOME?

This guide will help you to focus on results and avoid getting distracted by things that don't matter. You'll find this guide packed with time-tested strategies and a focus on healthy, productive work (and teamwork!) with the right tools to get the job done.

**READY?
LET'S GO!**



HEALTH AND ERGONOMICS

RULE #1: HEALTH FIRST

Your health comes first, no matter what. Don't compromise on this!
Life with carpal tunnel syndrome and work stress sucks.

HEALTHY HABITS



SET A ROUTINE

Set a healthy routine for exercise and hygiene. Exercise daily, take a shower, get dressed, and eat meals at regular times.



WORK AT A DESK

Work ONLY at a desk with a good office chair. Never work from a couch or bed, or you will risk carpal tunnel and other painful injuries!



GET OUT!

Go outside! Sunshine and change are good for physical and mental health. Avoid loneliness by having lunch with friends and calling your mom.



TAKE BREAKS

Take some time every hour to stand up, stretch your body, and breath deeply. Life's too short to sit all day. Also, where is this guy's face?

TOOLS

Try the Pomodoro Technique: 25 minutes of work, then a 5 minute break. P.S. there's an app for that.

Not sure of the correct way to arrange your desk and chair? Search for "Zapier desk setup".

PRO TIPS

Don't forget the fam! If you have family who need you, plan time into your day for them, and tell them when you're available.

Your workspace should be tidy, clean, quiet, and comfortable. And if possible, a separate room with a door (psst, this is a tax write-off!)

PROPER AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

COULD THIS MEETING BE AN EMAIL?

Remote communication is much different from face-to-face. Use these strategies and tools to avoid frustration and ensure that you and your teams are effective communicators.

TRY THIS

Start with async first. Most chatter doesn't need to happen real-time.

AND THIS

Schedule all meetings in the afternoon, save mornings for your deepest work

WHAT KIND OF CHATTER?

Important And Urgent

Video conference: Zoom, UberConference, Google Meet, Slack, Skype, GoToMeeting, WebEx

Important, Not Urgent

Text chat or email: Slack, Microsoft Teams, Chanty, Flock, RocketChat, Gmail, Office 365.

Urgent, Not Important

Phone: You know, a telephone. Skype Out, Google Voice, or a video conference tool work too.

Not Urgent, Not Important

Email, Gmail via G Suite, Office 365, text chat like Slack, et al.

THE BEDROCK OF TEAMS

What you say and how you say it is more important when the majority of your conversation is over text, and async. Don't move on from a conversation until you are sure everyone has clarity.

Ensure you choose the right tool, depending on what you need to communicate. Most chats are ephemeral, so you'll still need to take good meeting notes and document decisions after discussions.

Take the time to communicate well. It's worth it so you can build trust and efficiency.



GET A HEADSET

Headsets with a microphone serve a dual purpose: calls AND music. Boltune and Corsair headsets are great quality.



AND A WEBCAM

Use your laptop webcam, or get a Logitech C920S HD, which has a privacy shutter so the NSA and weirdos can't spy on you.

TEAMWORK AND MANAGEMENT

THE 4 PILLARS

You need 4 types of tools to ensure that teamwork and management is effective, useful, and efficient. Choose 1 from each category.

KNOWLEDGE BASE

You need a centralized place to store information, knowledge, and how-tos.

- Notion
- Bloomfire
- Helpjuice
- Guru
- Confluence
- Google Sites (G Suite)
- Quip

CALENDAR

Anything that has to be done at a certain time, like meetings and dedicated work.

- Google Calendar (G Suite)
- Outlook (Office 365)
- iCloud Calendar
- Fantastical

FILE STORAGE

We need a place to store memes and pictures of cats. And crucial documents.

- Google Drive (G Suite)
- Microsoft OneDrive
- Dropbox
- Box
- JustCloud
- SpiderOak

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Everyone needs to know what to do, who will do it, and when they will.

- Asana
- Trello
- Monday
- Clubhouse
- Basecamp
- Jira
- Pivotal Tracker

PRODUCTIVITY HACKS

GET SMARTER ABOUT HOW YOU WORK

When you work from a home office, you need to level up to stay on task, distraction-free

DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Take advantage of your natural rhythms and strengths during the day



1. SET WORK HOURS

Done with work? Turn off your computer, leave your workspace, and carry on with life. Keep regular hours each day to build a routine.



2. MAKE A LIST

Plan a to-do list for your day, and choose one primary task that you'll get done, hell or high water.



3. HALVE YOUR DAY

Work on your primary task and any intensive tasks in the 1st half. Everything else goes in the 2nd half of the day, ESPECIALLY MEETINGS.



4. GO HEADS DOWN

When you're working, you're working. Don't get distracted by notifications, chatter, your pets, and cars passing by. Focus for a while and get it done!

TOOLS, TOOLS, AND MORE TOOLS

There's no shortage of good productivity tools. Here are some of the best.

TIME

Toggl
RescueTime
Be Focused
Focus Booster
Serene
Timely

TO-DO

Asana
Todoist
Wunderlist
Trello
Taskade
Todoist

NOTES

Notion
Evernote
Bear
Pocket
OneNote
Google Keep

SECURITY AND CONNECTIVITY

STAY SAFE OUT THERE

These tips will help you be secure, safe, and connected

BE SAFE, BE SECURE



NO PUBLIC WIFI

Yeah, the coffee shop is alluring, but the WiFi is not secure. You don't want someone snooping on your docs.



USE THE VPN

If your office has a VPN, use it to stay logged into your company network and encrypt your internet activity.



STRONG PASSWORD

Lock your phone and computer with a strong password (15+ random letters and numbers), facial recognition, or fingerprint scan.



AUTO-LOCK

Set your phone and computer to lock if not in use for more than a few minutes (max of 5). This prevents both hackers and meddling kids from using them.

STABLE CONNECTION

Nothing's worse than a flaky internet connection. Here's how to make sure yours is solid.

LINE OF SIGHT

You shouldn't have to walk through lots of walls, cement, bricks, or metal to get to the router. Move closer or get a WiFi Booster like the Galaway G1208.

BACKUP

If your connection goes down, use your phone's hotspot to get reconnected.
Warning: this uses your data plan ☹️

SPEED UP

If you're working from home you need a fast connection. Call your service provider and get the fastest speed you can afford. It's a tax write-off.

UNORTHODOX TIPS

COUNTERINTUITIVE YET USEFUL

Just...check with your manager first

TAKE A NAP



Under 90 mins/day, and don't let them interrupt your nighttime sleep. Naps restore your productivity and mental ability if you're drained.

NO NOTIFICATIONS



Exit email, silence your phone, disable Slack, and put in a calendar appointment that says you're busy. Take an hour and FOCUS.

OFFSET SCHEDULE



Night owl? Early riser? Ensure you overlap hours with others in your office, and set your office hours to your most productive times.

TALK TO YOURSELF



You're probably alone anyway, so who cares? Talking to yourself is a great way to think through issues.

JUST ONE THING



Pretty much everybody is horrible at multitasking. Just do one thing at a time, and put 100% of your attention on it until you're done.



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PRESENTED BY SERENITY SOFTWARE

We help tech companies build excellent software teams and processes so they can eliminate downtime, reduce bugs, foster positive team culture, and dramatically grow their profits.

We made this guide based on 15 years of experience working remotely, and helping other companies do it too.

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