



## TIPS FOR REMOTE WORKING

### WEEK 2

#### GENERAL TIPS

**Refine that routine!** We've heard a lot about how important it is for us to establish a routine for our days at home. We didn't really have time to prepare and adapt to these new circumstances, so go easy on yourself and those around you as you make sense of how to make this work.

- By now you might be finding that parts of how you initially intended to work during this time haven't been particularly helpful. Or you might have heard something someone else is doing that you think is worth a try. Be open to adapting your routine to suit your circumstances so you can be as productive as possible and get through this time. If you haven't really set a good routine yet and if you think it would help, make some time to do so.

**Is the neighbours barking dog driving you crazy?** Or is there background noise from your 'bubble' that makes it hard to concentrate at times?

- Consider finding a way that works for you to block any excess noise. If you can, put some headphones in or music on. Studies show that a soft music or soothing nature sounds activates the calming part of your brain, helps you concentrate and lowers heart rate and blood pressure. However, if there are people in your household who may need you, make sure you can still be reached!

**Go to the same designated workspace** on a regular basis so your mind doesn't wander, you can focus and increase your productivity.

- Establish tight psychological boundaries so you're not constantly reminded of temptations around you (there's chocolate cake in the fridge) or unfinished personal tasks -such as doing laundry, vacuuming or organising your spice rack - that otherwise could compromise your productivity. And complete these personal activities outside of work hours as you normally would.

**Put down the tools** at the end of the day.

- After a reasonable day's work, put away your computer and any other work tools just as you would store carpentry tools after building shelves or baking ingredients after making a cake. Keeping work reminders out of sight keeps them out of mind and helps you relax at the end of the day.

#### THE BUBBLE

We have found ourselves in different situations as we entered Alert Level 4 last week. Some of us, if we live alone, have had to figure out how to remain socially connected while being physically distant. Others realised the school holidays would be brought forward and along with getting to grips with working remotely, we would also need to find ways to occupy the kids at home. And others of us are at home with just our significant other or are living in a flat with other people, all trying to figure out how this is going to work.

We've compiled a few tips below for these various situations as our working remotely will differ depending on who is in our 'bubble.'



## 1. FOR THOSE IN A ONE PERSON 'BUBBLE'

Being on your own during this time of nationwide lockdown will have unique challenges compared with those who have kids and other people around in the house all the time.

### **If you haven't done so already, consider setting up a support group of colleagues and friends.**

Make plans to meet on a regular basis and share creative ways you've adjusted to the new situation. Reach out to people as much as possible. Share about how you are finding the lockdown, but also talk about work projects with colleagues or spend time socially with friends online or over the phone. Lots of people are finding creative ways to do this. For example, hosting end of the week 'drinks' online, playing games together virtually or starting up discussion/prayer groups.

### **Make a plan.**

If you don't already, you might want to create a clear list of things you will focus on each day. It is sometimes hard to get going at the start of the day, especially if there aren't other people around to prompt ideas or talk things through with, so creating lists and setting goals might help to structure your day.

### **Take the opportunity.**

Outside of work, many of us will find it challenging to find ways to figure out how to be in physical isolation. Despite the challenges, this is a great opportunity to get to do some of the things you have been meaning to do for a long time. Shut out Covid-19 for a while and focus on other things. Do a puzzle if you have one and are into that. Make pizzas from scratch or learn a new recipe. Take part in a home workout class. Head to a museum for a [virtual tour](#). Take the time to learn a new skill you have always wanted to develop. Head outside for walks often. Make a list of things you would like to do during this time and enjoy having the time to do so.

## 2. FOR THOSE IN A 'BUBBLE' WITH KIDS

### **Ease into this new 'normal'.**

It is going to take time for your family to adjust to a new way of being together and how your work fits into this is no different. It will be helpful, depending on the age of your children, if you are able to be clear about when you are working and what you would like them to do during this time. However, you are still a parent and that doesn't change when you are "working." You should feel okay about doing what you need to in order to meet their immediate needs during the "workday."

### **Continue to adapt.**

As time goes on, it will be helpful to continue talking as a family about how things are going and thinking of creative solutions to any challenges you find you are continually facing. It might be that a particular part of the day is most difficult, and you could structure your workday differently to respond to this. If you have two working parents in the household, you might want to look at how you can both structure your day so that one parent is available to the children at different times.

### **Embrace your new "colleagues".**

Like it or not, in many ways your family are your new work colleagues. Just as you would chat with colleagues at the office, you should get up and chat with your new colleagues at home. This little gesture may be important for the wellbeing of both you and your family.

### **Agree on schedules/routines.**

If you haven't done so already and if your children are old enough, spend some time together working on co-constructed schedules for everyone. However, make sure that you all agree that these are also very flexible. This means that you know what everyone has committed to and can encourage each other along the way but are aware that things will change at times. Take those walks outside together and pull out the scooters/bikes too. This time together in lockdown does have the potential to be positive for your family and certainly will be something we won't be forgetting anytime soon.



### 3. FOR THOSE IN A 'BUBBLE' WITH A FEW OTHERS

By now, the reality of the lockdown will feel very real. We might be starting to feel a bit of a strain on our relationships as we figure out what almost 24/7 contact with those we live with looks like. You might be living with your husband, wife or partner, flatting with a number of other people or in another situation. No matter who you live with, it is necessary to consider ways to look after these relationships. If you are working remotely with others in the house, here are a few tips for making sure things work well. As with most things, communication is key.

#### **Check in regularly.**

When it was announced that we would be entering a time of nationwide lockdown, ideally you would have talked with those you were living with around how to manage the new 'normal'. If you haven't already, you may wish to do so soon. Regardless, it will be a good idea to make sure you are checking in with those around you to see how things are working for everyone and if anything needs to be readjusted.

#### **Discuss your schedules either the night before or morning of.**

It might be helpful for others in your house to roughly know when you have video conferences scheduled (so they can avoid streaming Netflix at the same time!) or when you plan to head out for a walk etc. Make sure you close doors when you have meetings, use headphones to minimise noise. If you are both using video calling at the same time, you may need to consider turning video off to make sure you have good bandwidth.

#### **Respect the work environment.**

Your home has just become a multi-person-multi-use space. By now you have likely decided on where you will be working and if you are in shared spaces, make sure you are considerate of others. If the other people in your house are working try not to interrupt them, treat it as if they were in their normal workplace and consider sending them a text instead.

#### **Plan time apart & plan time for fun.**

No matter how careful we are, we will get on each other's nerves during this time. To avoid this as much as possible, plan some time apart. Go for a walk alone if you can. Commit to doing different things from one another outside of work hours.

It is also worthwhile making time to do something special with whoever it is that is in your 'bubble.' Create dedicated time when you turn off your devices and spend positive time together. Shut out Covid-19 for a while and focus on other things. Play board games or do a puzzle. Make pizzas from scratch or learn a new recipe. Celebrate a [weird holiday](#). Take part in a home workout class. Head to a museum for a [virtual tour](#), you can even [check out](#) parts of the Vatican too!

