

Productive tips and tricks for remote working

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At the start of the year, tech experts were abuzz with technology trend predictions for 2020, but no one could have anticipated the technological impact a pandemic like Covid-19 would cause as workers become more reliant on technology more than ever.



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Many companies are requiring employees to work from home. However, just last year, almost 80% of IT decision-makers in South Africa believed that their employees are more productive in a central office environment as compared to working remotely, as revealed by a 2019 Citrix study.

Things have taken a defining turn, however, and 93% of decision-makers do agree that flexible working, enabled by the right technology, increases productivity and agility. It can be hard though if you've never done it or haven't done it regularly.

Learn to fail

You're going to have successes, equally, you're also going to have failures. Learn from them and make adjustments frequently, even if you have been working from home for a while.

Be transparent with your colleagues, your team, and your manager about what you're doing so you can find the best way to be productive. Failure is part of it, always experiment with new approaches.

Define your divide

Being a productive remote worker requires discipline, especially if you're trying to show that you're trustworthy and that working from home isn't something for emergency situations only. Find ways to divide your "work mode" and your "home mode."

Have a dedicated working space. When you find that place, record a few minutes of audio there (for example, using Skype's Sound Test Service), ideally with your family around, and listen to it. You'd be surprised how much people on your conference calls can hear.

Also have distinct work and home routines. Start every day the same way, which helps you transition to "work mode." For examples, when your headphones are on, you're probably working so you wear them, even if you're not listening to anything.

Engage your family

First, find the right balance between work and home. Work-from-home discussions often focus on an employee's relationship with their manager. But what about family?

If you're new to working from home, understand that it doesn't just mean change for you. It also means change for your family. You may be surrounded by family all day, but you'll have to develop tricks to make it work. You may want to have physical signals to let them know you're working (those headphones, for example). Have clear rules around interruptions

Work schedule

Learn to get smarter about working and getting better at organising your schedule. Start by planning your day, so you know what you want to work on and what you expect to complete by the end of the day.

Identify your most productive time of day, it could be 6 AM to 9 AM, for instance. You could divide your day into small blocks. These work blocks are often linked to each other, too.

Achieving long-term success

For many people, working from home is temporary. But what if you want to make it a long-term option?

Here are few tips for making a long-term work-from-home arrangement successful.

- **Commit and deliver:** You want this to work for you and your manager and company. Show them that they can trust you, that you will work hard, and that you can deliver on your commitments.
- **Invest in your office:** This could be investing in monitors at home, a powerful desktop, and a couple of NUC servers, a high-end chair and a standing desk. Get a good microphone or headphones with hear-through technology ideally - with the push of a button, you can clearly hear everything that happens around you.
- **Take regular breaks:** With a home office, your job can overwhelm your home life. Take regular breaks, have some snacks/drinks at hand, and get exercise during the day. With a home office, your schedule is probably more flexible.

Take advantage of it. What you do during the day is probably more important than when you do it.

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