REMOTE/HOME WORKING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

These are worrying times. We understand and have put together some tips to help you if you are working from home for the first time. Even those who undertake remote working on a regular basis will benefit from a "refresh" of ideas to make home/remote working manageable, healthy and psychologically possible.

And, after all, working from home will not only help keep you and your colleagues safe but it will also help play an important part in reducing the spread of COVID-19 and, hopefully, lessen the huge burden on the NHS.

RIGHT WORKPLACE RIGHT NOW

Where you work at home is important, otherwise you can become stressed and resentful. Try these tips:

Your Home Office

- **Select a dedicated workspace,** ideally with a decent chair to support your back. You need a space you can walk away from at the end of the day to switch off. Some use a dedicated room and physically close the door at the end of the day, not entering until the workday starts again. If you don't have this, try to create a space and tidy away all your work at the end of the day so it is not a constant reminder. The work: home divide is important, even if you work from home.
- **Use a proper monitor, keyboard and mouse,** etc rather than trying to use your laptop keyboard and screen if you can. Have a proper workstation.
- Try to **create a workspace that you can actually use**: We encourage self-management where at all possible, using the links and guides we provide.
- You may experience a **change in the support** with a change of seating from the office furniture you were accustomed to. Your home desk may not be set up appropriately to support your postural needs. You may also move less often and become more sedentary.
- Read the following on **sitting comfortably** and musculoskeletal health: (copy links): www.csp.org.uk/publications/do-you-sit-desk-all-day-leaflets
- Read the **HSE guide** to workstations www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf or the one for DSE www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l26.pdf
- **Talk to** Duradiamond Healthcare about Remote Workstation Assesssments (available during the COVID-19 pandemic).

Practical Advice

- **Get dressed for work each day** (or at least out of your pyjamas - no one wants to see that onesie!). Getting dressed will help get you in the right headspace for work and allow you to take video calls.
- **Keep to office hours:** If you are working from home, you may also be inclined to work longer due to lack of routine that the office typically offers. Don't be tempted to blur the lines between **home and work** life too much. Set a fixed start and end time to your home working day.

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RIGHT WORKPLACE RIGHT NOW

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- **Structure your day:** Plan and organise your day as you would if you're in the office. Prioritise your tasks and plan when you're going to do them. You'll stay more focused and motivated throughout the day when you know what needs to be done. Plan ahead so you make sure you have the things you need when you're working from home.
- **Try to mirror your office practices if possible:** Try to keep to the same routine you follow at the office.
- **Keep in touch with your colleagues:** You need to have some sort of way to have moments where there are just updates. Some companies, at 9 a.m. on Tuesday and Thursday morning, will have a quick 30-minute regular meeting where everybody who's working remotely calls in and talks about what they're working on. One of the biggest shifts that happen by going from in-person to remote is you don't have the opportunity to bump into people at the coffee machine while you're getting lunch. Communicate to people you live with that you're working, e.g. if you have a video call with your colleagues and need everyone to be quiet.
- **Accept limitations:** If you cannot access everything you need for certain tasks, acceptance of this and changing tasks will be important to reduce frustration.
- **Listen to music or the radio quietly**, since working from home can sometimes be a little too quiet, which makes it difficult to focus.
- **Take frequent breaks** as you would at work and take lunch breaks where you do not look at anything work-related.
- **Go outside!** Even if it's just a quick walk around your block, the fresh air will do wonders.
- Make sure you **keep up your hygiene/social distancing habits** – continue to wash your hands with soap and hot water for 20 seconds or use hand gel if soap and water are not available. And try to keep at least two metres away from others outside the home. If one of your family has COVID-19 there is a separate procedure to follow: www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance
- **Sign out and turn off** notifications for work-related emails and instant messaging when the day is over — especially if you're signed in on your personal devices. Overworking can be a real issue, so clearly define the hours you will be working and stick to it.

Sources:
www.hse.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance
www.csp.org.uk
www.gov.uk

Please Note. This advice is subject to change due to regular updates announced by the Government. We recommend you follow Government guidelines.