

OPERATOR INSIGHTS

presented by  **ENSEMBLE**
HEALTH PARTNERS

So Happy Together

Surviving in a Work from
Home Environment

Working from home: dream come true or biggest nightmare? Your level of responsibility and whether you are an introvert or extrovert can influence how you feel about it. With COVID-19 precautions requiring many people to relocate from an office to a home environment, this question keeps popping up. This is a dream come true for many introverts, people with long commutes and those who thrive in staying in one place. For others, extroverts, those who thrive in fast-paced, busy places and crave connection, this could be their biggest nightmare. For both groups, adjusting to this unexpected change can be a challenge and add to the stress we are all feeling. How do you prepare for something you've been thrown into?

It all starts with your mindset. Remember, even with all these changes, you are still in control of your responses and reactions. Even while you are out of the office and in your home environment, others can still see, hear, and feel how you respond. It's okay to be vulnerable. It's okay to struggle during this time. You are not alone; we are all in this together. Let's use this time as an opportunity to learn from and support each other so our bonds are even stronger when we reunite.

I have provided some practical tips everyone can use to make this experience smoother and to keep us on task while we work from home over the next several weeks.

Be Intentional with Your Resources

Whether it comes easy or it is a struggle, working from home requires intentionality. We have seen it with social distancing... people still want to feel connected to others; that is part of being human. To be connected means making an intentional, thoughtful effort. If you can't stop by and chat with your coworker, set up a short Zoom meeting or even do the old-fashioned thing: use the telephone. Instant messaging via Skype (or whichever platform you use) can also assist in keeping you connected with your team. Reach out to people to ask questions, to say "hi" or to talk about last night's shows! Think of ways to schedule your time so you are not just doing the work, schedule time to call, Skype, or Zoom with your coworkers.

Have your team set up a virtual workspace in Zoom. Leave your mics on so others can hear keyboards tapping and papers shuffling. Have the coworker conversations you're used to having, so it feels like you're in the same room. Not only will this help associates feel more engaged, there may be some great dialogue or idea sharing during the informal chatting.

Develop a New Routine

If you can set up a home office, mentally separate that space from the rest of your home. Your new commute may be walking from the kitchen to the office, but the mindset of "going to work" can help you gear up for the day and put you in the right frame of mind to focus. Be disciplined about the way you manage your day. Stick to a schedule. Take a shower and get dressed just like you would if going to the office. I'm all for working in pajamas, but maybe limit that to Mondays where we all need a little extra incentive to kick off our week.

Be active! Working from home doesn't have to result in unhealthy habits. Get moving; walk around your sofa while you take a call, walk up and down your stairs if you have them, stand up and do some stretches. Get some fresh air and get outside on your breaks; or at the very least open your windows and let in some fresh air. Pack your lunch and keep healthy snacks on hand. Challenge your co workers to get fit; set your own personal goals for how you can come out of this healthier than ever.

Journaling is a great way to get all your thoughts out and can be a great stress reliever. Write about what you are grateful for, how you helped someone today, any fears you may have. Remind yourself to take this one day at a time. It doesn't need to take a long time; just 15 to 30 minutes of journaling can be effective. As a bonus, you'll have the thoughts recorded to look back on later. Chances are, you'll see (and be able to celebrate) all that you've been able to overcome.

Changing Your Mindset

You may feel a shift in your mindset after a few days. Working from home can be fun and empowering! You can play your favorite music...break out into song or bust a move in the middle of the day! Without distractions, you have the ability to really hear our patients, your coworkers, and your own thoughts. You may be even more productive! Since there is no commute, you have more time to pick up that book, take that walk, or plan your next big adventure! Yes, plan for the future because there will be a brighter one ahead.

Stay connected and stay well!



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