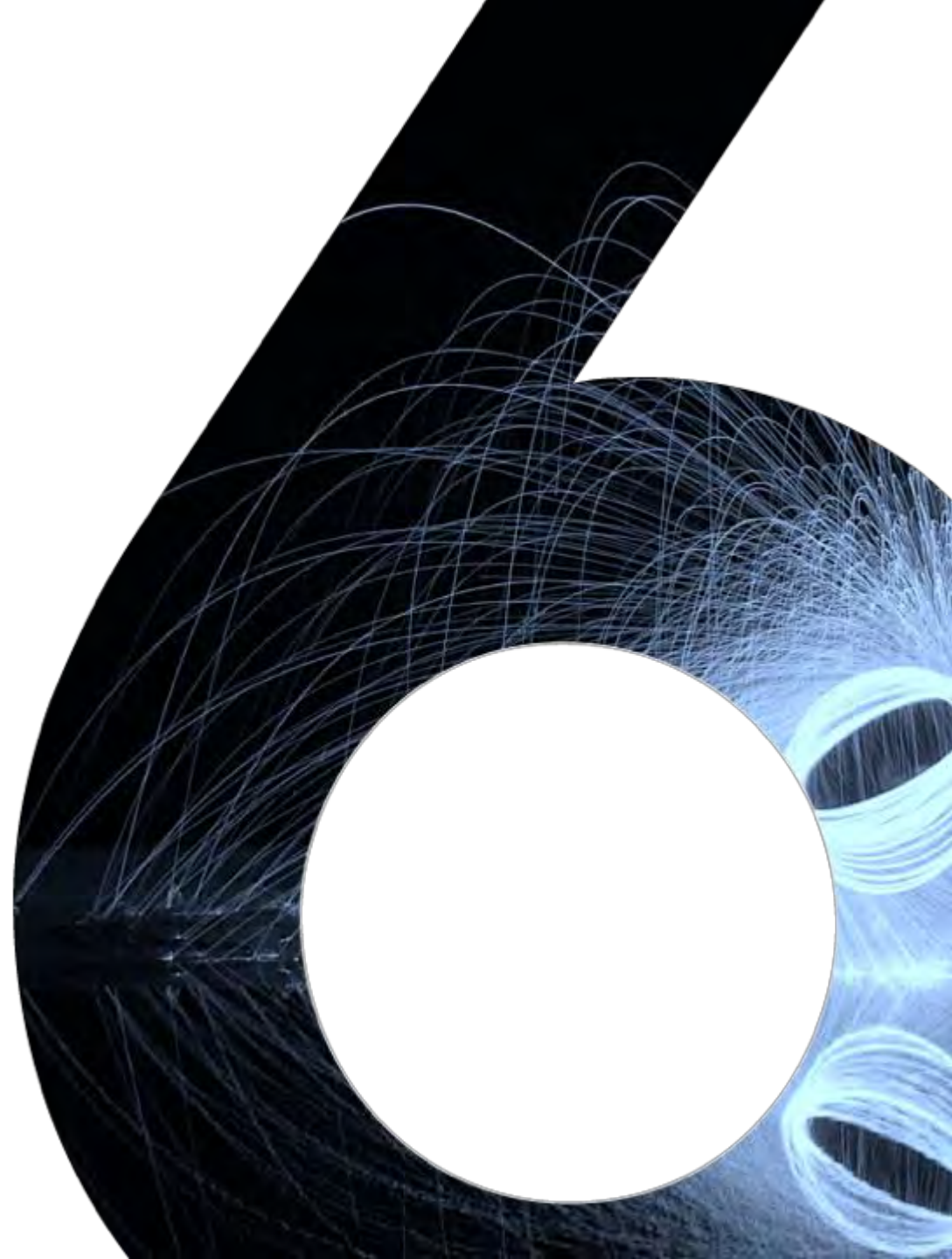# Staying Healthy and Productive When Working From Home

An easy to use guide created by Six Degrees

Briony Simpson, People Business Partner, Six Degrees

Enabling your brilliance.

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Enabling your brilliance

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This might be your first time working from home for an extended period and it may all feel a bit weird. But we're still all in this together – just because you can't communicate with your colleagues face-to-face, doesn't mean you can't continue to deliver brilliant services to your clients.

All of the advice in this guide can be implemented today. Have a read, have a think about how it applies to you in your role, and please feel free to share your own tips and tricks for staying healthy and productive when working from home.

Enabling your brilliance

Setting the Scene
The perfect home worker

Look, there's no such thing as the perfect home worker. We get that. But if there was, what would they be like? Consider these attributes, and how they can apply to you.

Okay, this is a lot to ask of anyone. But if we can all try to keep these attributes in mind when we're working from home, we'll make strides in going from good home workers, to great, to brilliant.

Comfortable spending long periods physically alone

An effective communicator

Self-disciplined and self-motivated

Able to plan work and prioritise effectively

Resilient to setbacks that could get you down

Able to separate work from home life

Confident working without supervision

Your Home Working Day

Starting the day with a positive mindset

1. You may not like it, but you should take the time to shower, get dressed and head to your dedicated workspace. You'll be in a much more positive mindset than if you were to roll out of bed at 8:59am and start work in your PJs.

2. About your dedicated workspace: try to keep it clear and in order. Not everyone is lucky enough to have a home office or large dining table to work from. Wherever you setup to work for the day, just make sure it's comfortable, as calm as possible, and free of domestic distractions.

Your Home Working Day

Teamwork and collaboration

1. If we're going to get through this period of uncertainty, we're going to have to work together effectively.

2. Collaborate as much as possible with your colleagues online. With tools like Microsoft Teams there's no reason you can't make the majority of your regular meetings virtual.

3. Colleagues do not always have to be in the same location to work effectively, but they do need to communicate and collaborate regularly. So use a combination of telephone and email contact, along with frequent virtual meetings.

4. Use Microsoft Teams (or whatever collaboration software you use) to guide daily huddles. Having time scheduled in for check-ins (max 15 minutes) retains focus, and you can always follow up on detail later.
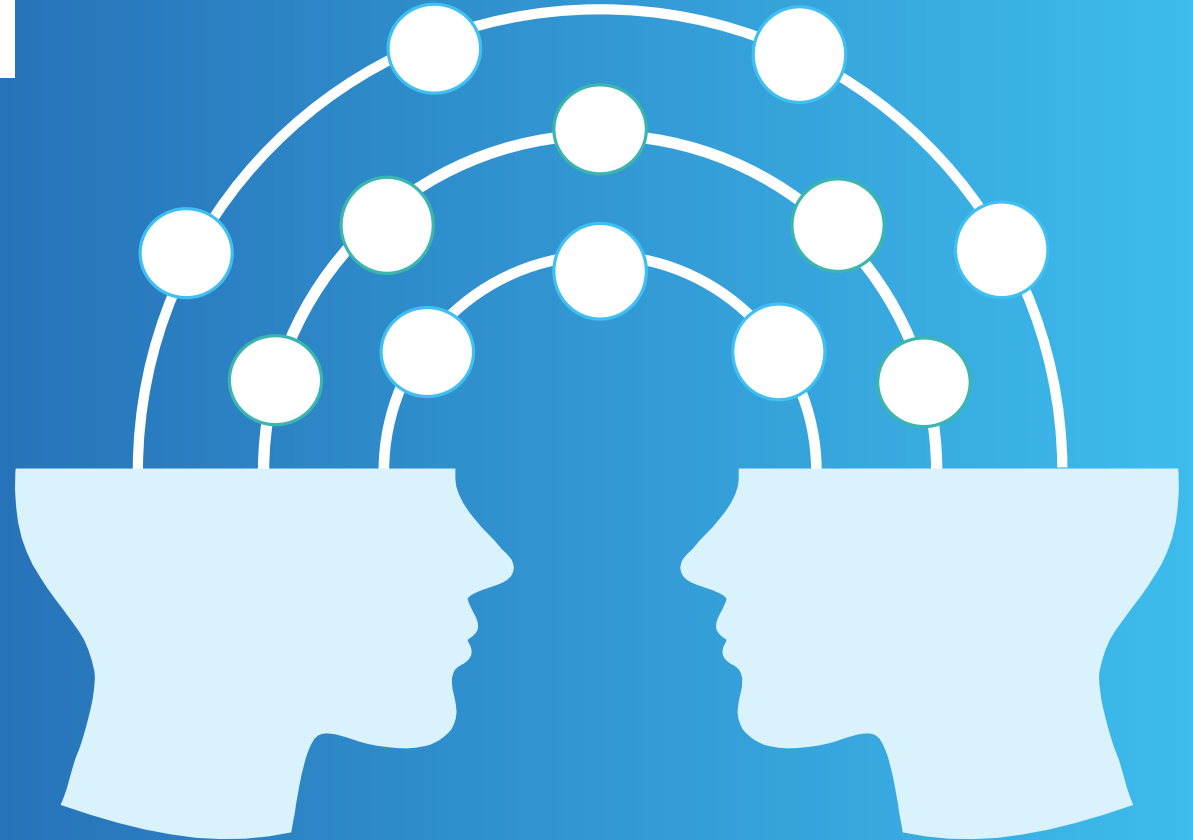
Your Home Working Day

Meetings

1 When it comes to running meetings whilst working from home, Microsoft Teams can be your secret weapon.

2 Use your webcam as much as possible – it helps give a bit more of a personal connection and you'll know when people have finished speaking or want to speak.

3 Have a shared document for virtual meetings so people can follow along with the conversation and keep track of what's been agreed/asked – don't assume that somebody else is writing it in their pad if you can't see them doing it.

4 When using collaboration software for virtual meetings, expect delays around muting/unmuting.

5 Remember, people are not all set up with home offices – be understanding and respectful of this situation, especially as they may have others in their household.

Your Home Working Day

Focused work time

1. Don't let that green tick next to your profile stress you out! You're allowed to close your collaboration software for a bit if you need some focus time – maybe give people a heads-up, but nobody will assume you are skiving off.

2. Things might work a little differently at home, especially if you're using a work network or are expected to sync to a central location. Save and back up your work regularly to be on the safe side.

3. Set expectations. It's not just you who might need to adjust to you working at home. Set clear boundaries so those you live with know that you're at work and you can't be disturbed by your home life.

4. Don't pretend you can do life admin throughout your working day – it disrupts concentration and makes for a weird vibe when you jump from putting a wash on to talking to somebody about something super serious. Plan your admin time.

Your Home Working Day

Lunch and breaks

1. Take time off if you need to. You wouldn't go into the office when you're feeling under the weather, so you don't have to work at home when you're sick either. Let your manager know if you are genuinely unwell as you normally would.

2. Look after yourself. It's easy to lose yourself in work without the distractions of your usual workplace. Try to get plenty of fresh air – open a window or go for a walk at lunchtime. Move to a new area of the house if you're struggling to concentrate, but try to keep your rest areas free from work.

Your Home Working Day

Supporting each other

1 Be present online, and over-communicate if needs be. We use office chit-chat to keep on top of what the rest of the team are working on when we're all together. So make sure those conversations still happen. There's always a little time for inconsequential, non-work chat.

2 If you feel a bit lonely, confused by some work, or like you're making no headway, ping somebody to share a feeling or frustration. When nobody can pick up on your feelings, it can feel like you have to fix it all yourself. You really don't – we work in teams for a reason.

3 It's really hard to judge what the general mood is, so introduce a low-key way of sharing general feelings. If people are happy to, share a number out of 10 for your general vibe in daily huddles so people know who to support and who to go to for a bit of a pick-me-up.

Your Home Working Day

The end of the work day

1. Set an alarm for the end of the day and try to switch off from work mode.

2. You should consider the impact your out-of-hours emails and messages have on others. Many of us habitually check our emails during the evening and weekends, but our time away from the office is essential to helping us relax and recharge. Do you really need to send that email tonight, or can it wait 'til the morning? Set clear boundaries, and remember that 'out of office' really does mean out of office – those emails, meetings and tasks will still be there when you get back.

Staying Healthy and Productive

The importance of mental wellbeing

When life gets busy, self-care is often the first thing to go out of the window. Please take care of your mental health as we work through these uncertain times together.

You can't pour from an empty cup. Make self-care a priority and look after yourself first.

Get enough sleep

Rest and self-care go hand-in-hand.

Make time for personal care

Even if it's just getting dressed and brushing your teeth.

Move your body more

Walk, run or just stretch. Release those endorphins!

Go outside

Try leaving the house every day, even if it's just for a short walk around the garden.

Connect with others

Text or call friends and family.

Schedule some 'me time'

Do something you love – reading, walking, trashy TV…

Be kind to yourself

Try not to feel guilty if you don't manage to do as much as you'd like. Start small.

Talk about your feelings

Especially if you are struggling – it isn't a sign of weakness!

Repeat

Self-care isn't a one-time thing. Little acts of self-care practiced often make for a healthier, happier you.

Guidance for Managers

Supporting your teams

- Trust your team – they're doing their best and want to balance their work and their obvious concerns about friends and family.

- Balance not being around at all and getting into micro management territory during this time – you must give clear output and driven guidance as you will not be able to task manage.

- Diarise the formal stuff and have informal 'check ins' to stay connected.

- Implement daily huddles with your team.

- Set clear expectations – make sure your teams know when they are expected to be available to each other.

- Over communicate – invest time in telling people what's going on as you don't have the kitchen area opportunities to disseminate information.

- Do you expect your teams to be 'dressed for business' on internal calls? Could you relax your dress code during this time? You will obviously still need to be mindful of clients.

- Working from home could create new working hours and patterns. However, this will still need to be in line with SLAs in response to enquiries, phone calls and published opening times.

- Without the need to commute, people could start work earlier and finish earlier– if used properly this flexibility could extend our service hours and help people with their work-life balance.

We're in this together

We're in this together. If you're struggling in any way, speak to your manager or HR department. For more guidance you may also want to check out some of the links we've provided on the following page.

We're In This Together
Where to go for guidance and support

1. eLearning on Working Collaboratively Online – https://preview.offtheshelf.host/g2/digitalskills/DS7/index.html

2. eLearning on Using Email Effectively – https://preview.offtheshelf.host/g2/digitalskills/DS6/index.html

3. eLearning on Staying Productive – https://preview.offtheshelf.host/g2/skillsforworkandlife/SM4/index.html

4. eLearning on Instant Messaging – https://preview.offtheshelf.host/g2/digitalskills/DS5/index.html

5. Coronavirus – behaviour expert top tips for working from home – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FaXvQdj74XM

6. Coronavirus and my Wellbeing – https://oakwoodtraining.co.uk/coronavirus-and-my-wellbeing/

7. Does "Agile/Home/Flexible" Working Increase Risk – https://oakwoodtraining.co.uk/agilehomeflexible-working-increase-risk/

8. Coronavirus and remote working: looking after your mental health – https://hoxby.com/blog/remote-working-coronavirus-mental-health

9. The True Challenge of Managing Remote Workers: People Who Work Too Hard – https://www.inc.com/jason-fried/excerpt-true-challenge-of-remote-workers.html

10. 7 Effective Ways to Build Resilient Relationships While Working Remotely! – https://thriveglobal.com/stories/7-effective-ways-to-build-resilient-relationships-while-working-remotely/

11. The Surprising Truth About Working From Home – https://www.regus.co.uk/work-uk/surprising-truth-working-home/

12. What is a Psychological Contract? – https://www.alchemyformanagers.co.uk/topics/6ixdhhPwDvZFjsZc.html

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