#workfromhome

Working from home during the coronavirus shutdown

How to handle working remotely

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Content

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Why should we all work from home?

Due to the global coronavirus pandemic, many countries have taken steps to slow the **spread of Sars-CoV-2** (the virus' official name). Public life has become severely restricted. As a public health measure to protect society as effectively as possible, work and leisure activities should take place at home. Events have been cancelled, and only business' and public institutions providing basic services remain open. Many employers have chosen to let their employees work from home.

The purpose of these severe restrictions is to **slow down the spread** of the virus. The saying goes – flatten the curve – the curve signifying a graphic representation of the growing number of infections, which should remain as flat as possible. In turn, the aim of flattening the curve is to ensure that the health system is not overburdened. If too many people get COVID-19 (the disease caused by the virus), it can lead to shortages in medical supplies, medical personnel, and hospital facilities. Flattening the curve buys us time. Time that is needed right now to develop treatment and vaccines.

In addition, **social isolation** protects at-risk groups: it is currently assumed that most people are not overly concerned with contracting the disease, but COVID-19 poses a lethal risk to the elderly and individuals with pre-existing conditions. To help mitigate these risks, contact with these groups should be avoided as much as possible.

Fact

Much of the world is currently in a state of emergency, and there is a lot that still remains unknown. Every day new details, case numbers, and rules come to light. Public Health England provides daily updates on the latest coronavirus pandemic news on their dedicated webpage|Information from Public Health England about the coronavirus|https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus
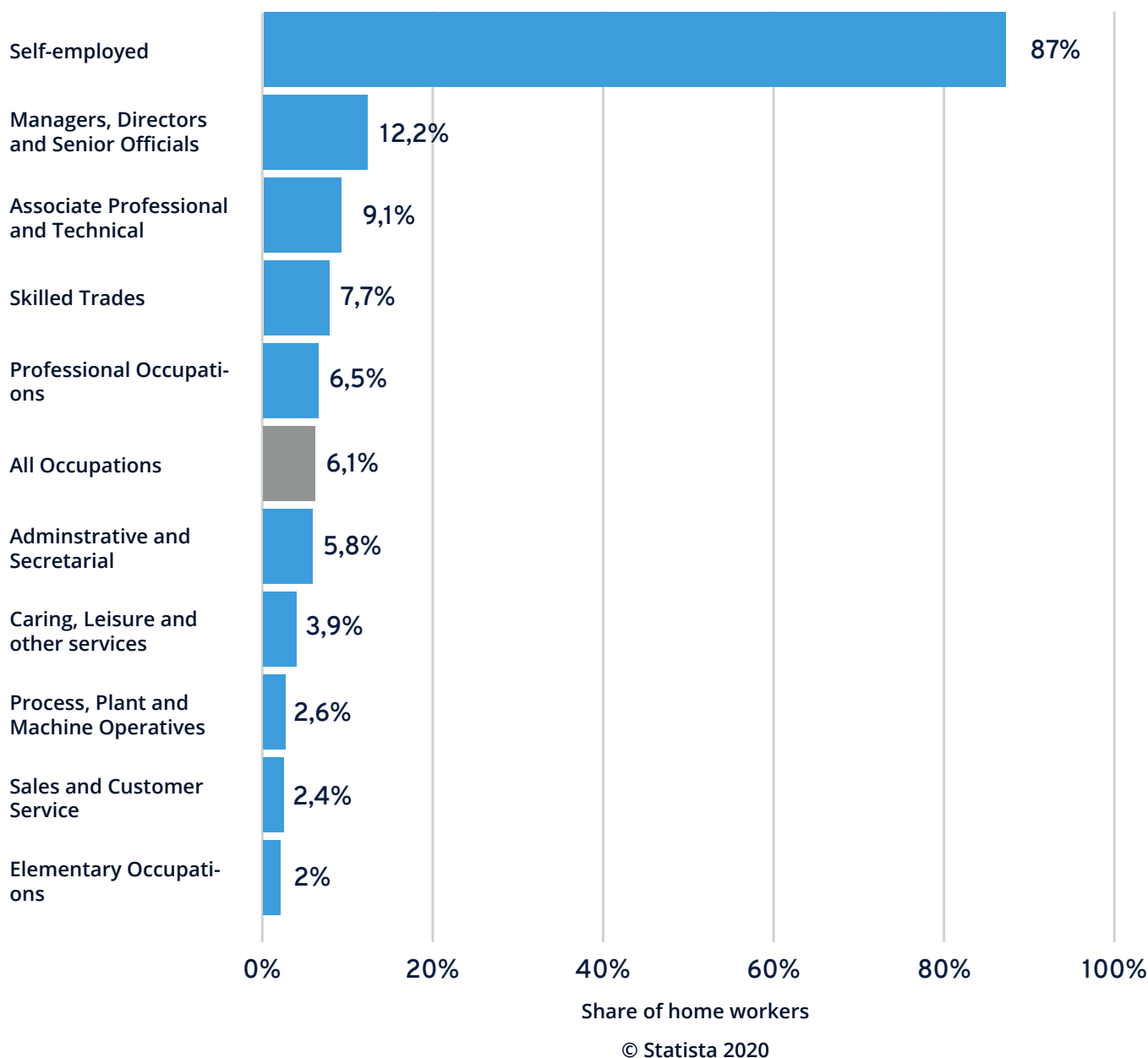
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There are **two primary risks** involved with going to the office as normal: the risk of mutual contagion does not just affect the office environment itself, but also the journey to work. When taking public transport, people tend to stand very close to one another and maintaining the two metres distance as recommended by experts is virtually impossible. Since hygiene measures are difficult to implement and enforce on the underground, trams, trains, and buses, there is a particularly high risk of becoming infected, or infecting others.

If possible, people should stay at home to protect themselves and other people around them. Luckily, many work tasks can be carried out from home. For some companies, working remotely has long been part of their policies, while for others the situation is entirely new. But setting up an office at home entails more than just switching on a laptop and getting started. Technical equipment, a suitable work space, effective work processes – **different rules apply** at home compared to the usual workplace. To protect the employee's health, but maintain productivity, there are certain factors that must be paid attention to.

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What does working from home entail?

Working from home seems great at first, and has been the norm **for freelancers and the self-employed for a long time**. The outbreak of COVID-19 and the social distancing measures that came with it have made working from home a necessity for many people. Unsurprisingly, some people aren't sure how to come to terms with this swift change in their circumstances.

Share of people in employment who work from home in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2017/18, by occupation category

Occupation category	Share
Self-employed	87%
Managers, Directors and Senior Officials	12,2%
Associate Professional and Technical	9,1%
Skilled Trades	7,7%
Professional Occupations	6,5%
All Occupations	6,1%
Adminstrative and Secretarial	5,8%
Caring, Leisure and other services	3,9%
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	2,6%
Sales and Customer Service	2,4%
Elementary Occupations	2%

Share of home workers

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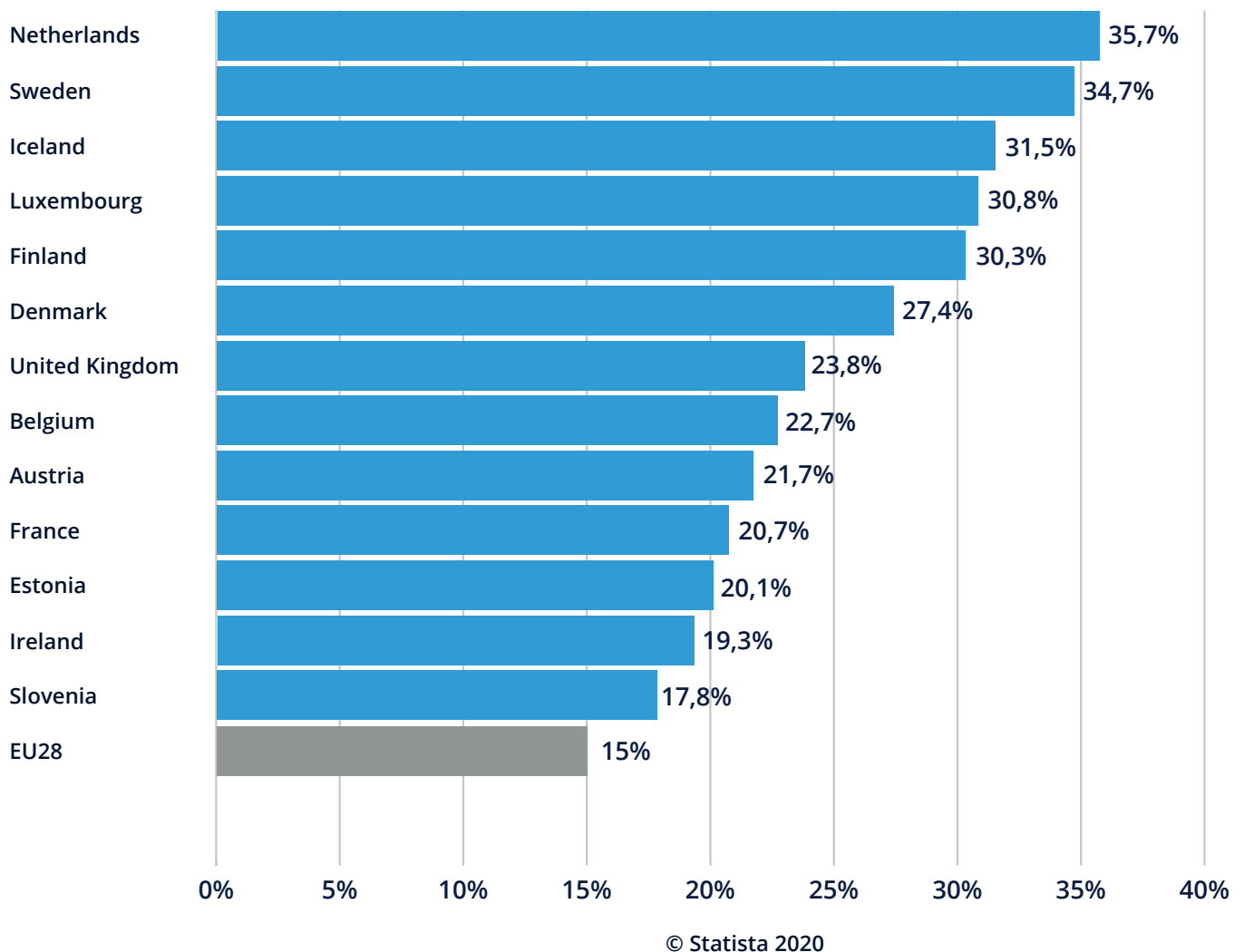Whether or not you have the option to work from home often depends on what type of work you do. /
Source: https://www.statista.com/statistics/1066184/home-workers-by-category-in-the-united-kingdom-uk

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When working from home, it is important to continue doing the same work you would do in your usual office, where possible. To be able to do this, certain technical and technological requirements must be met. If employees do not have access to crucial data or the necessary software, then the quality of their work and their motivation may suffer. When working from home, it is up to the employee where they work. Without social distancing requirements in place, employees who prefer working in cafés or libraries could do so. In this instance, the working arrangement would be referred to as **working remotely** from a **mobile office**, since the employee can move their workplace freely.

Share of employed people aged between 15 to 64 that sometimes or usually work from home in selected European countries in 2018

Country	Share
Netherlands	35,7%
Sweden	34,7%
Iceland	31,5%
Luxembourg	30,8%
Finland	30,3%
Denmark	27,4%
United Kingdom	23,8%
Belgium	22,7%
Austria	21,7%
France	20,7%
Estonia	20,1%
Ireland	19,3%
Slovenia	17,8%
EU28	15%

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The European countries in which working from home was the norm even before the Sars-CoV-2 outbreak. This may change significantly after the pandemic. / Source: https://www.statista.com/statistics/879251/employees-teleworking-in-the-eu/

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Do I have a right to work from home?

In short: No. The law does not give anyone the right to work from home. On the other hand, nobody can be obliged to work from home either. Whilst the UK does have flexible working laws, these don't necessarily grant working from home as an option and these workplace situations are regulated **individually and stipulated in an employment contract or by a collective agreement**.

Currently, the world finds itself in an unusual situation. Many nations are in a state of emergency, including the UK. While this does not change the legal situation, expert advice for employers includes providing remote working privileges to employees during this time of crisis.

In the interest of public health, many companies who have not previously offered working from home are transitioning to having most, if not all of their staff working remotely. This experience could lead to **meaningful change** in the way employees work in the long term, once the crisis is over.

Working from home – definition, meaning, advantages, and disadvantages
https://www.ionos.co.uk/startupguide/productivity/what-is-home-office/

Summary

Do employees have the right to work from home?

- There is no law permitting employees the legal right to work from home
- Working from home is made possible by an agreement between employer and employee
- In many instances, company or collective agreements dictate an employee's ability to work from home
- The outbreak of Sars-Cov-2 has led to many companies now offering the option to work from home
- Experiences during this crisis period may lead to new workplace options for employees once it is over

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How do I set up my home office?

Do you want to work from home? Have you decided to allow your employees to work from home in the future? Making the choice is the first step, but there's more that needs to be done. Employers, employees, and the self-employed must now take action and ensure they've got their home office set up properly. It is important to ensure that their equipment meets technical requirements for their work, that they set up an ergonomic workspace, and introduce new rules and routines for their hybrid home office.

Making remote work possible

When an employer decides to introduce a working from home policy, there are a few tasks that come with it. The most important thing is to ensure that employees have the **right technical equipment**.

In the best case scenario, each employee will have their own laptop already set up for working from home. There are two advantages to having a company-provided laptop: firstly, the laptop will be correctly configured to business servers. Secondly, **data security regulation** is made much easier. When employees use their own personal laptops, business owners can't be sure that they are sufficiently protected from cyber attacks.

Introducing the home office: advantages, technologies, tips & tricks
https://www.ionos.co.uk/startupguide/productivity/start-working-from-home/

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However, the technical side is just one aspect of preparation. To avoid conflicts between management and employees, **regulations should be agreed upon** in advance. These rules can relate to different areas of work, but there are two particularly important ones:

- **Data protection:** When working from home, it is inevitable that sensitive data will be moved from the company's direct access to the private individual's. Employees must be made aware that information should not be left lying around visibly. Third parties should never be able to view their screen.
- **Recording work time:** In a normal office environment, managers can see if their employees are present or not. This isn't always possible when they are working from home. That's why recording working time when working from home is extremely important. To avoid misunderstandings, employers and employees should discuss what their core working hours are, and what is considered to be working time and what is not.

Data protection also plays a major role for freelancers. In some cases, sensitive information is provided to freelancers, who must take data protection into account and ensure that information is not left for others (e.g. family members) to access.

Working from home is also a matter of **responsibility and trust**: it will not work if employers try to exercise too much control. If you are trying to constantly monitor your employees, it can disrupt the work flow and cause them to lose motivation. It is much more beneficial to relinquish some responsibility. This usually encourages employees.

Designing your home office

You have to be able to work from home in a sensible manner. The dream scenario of working in bed quickly loses its appeal. Anyone who has worked from home before knows you need a **real workplace** – a special spot reserved and specifically set up for work.

There are several advantages to this. On the one hand, setting up an office space at home has a **psychological effect**. When working from home, you run the risk of mixing leisure and work in an unhealthy manner. With a dedicated work space, which doesn't necessarily have to be a separate room, it is easier to draw a line between work and leisure time, and you can get into a working mode more easily.

On the other hand, creating a work space also has a **practical advantage**: you have everything you need for work right in front of you and you won't lose things in your flat, or waste time wandering around trying to find them.

When setting up the workplace, it is important to keep your health in mind. An ergonomic workplace is very important in a home office. For example, the table and chair should be individually adjusted for your comfort, otherwise **long-term postural damage, back pain, or headaches** can occur.

It would be best if both **the chair and table** in your home office are **height-adjustable**. This lets you sit at the right angle (110° to 120°) and adjust the work surface to a comfortable height. Ideally, the screen should be positioned so that the top of the screen is at eye level. However, no matter how well the table and chair are positioned, sitting for a long time is not conducive to good health. If you have a **standing desk** or can use a similar piece of furniture, you have the option to change your position. Your back will thank you for this! Changing positions frequently also supports good concentration.

Setting up a home office:
Ideas & tips for being at home
https://www.ionos.co.uk/startupguide/productivity/set-up-home-office/

Ergonomic workplace:
The best tips and tricks
https://www.ionos.co.uk/startupguide/productivity/ergonomic-workspace/

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> **Note**
>
> All employees and employers have been taken by surprise by COVID-19. Nobody could have foreseen that many people would be required to start working from home at very short notice. As a result, many jobs currently being done from home are not likely to comply with laws on occupational health and safety. Nevertheless, it is important to take into account as many of these aspects as possible and switch to a properly adjusted home office as soon as possible.

Whether you have a standing desk or not, be sure to move around often. Stretch regularly, grab a tea or coffee from the kitchen, step outside for some fresh air. **Good ventilation and enough sunlight** are vital for concentration. When you are working from home, you are encouraged to take frequent screen breaks from your computer.

Workplace ergonomics

- ✓ Feet in direct contact with the floor
- ✓ Open seating angle (110° - 120°)
- ✓ Upper monitor rim at eye level
- ✓ Symmetrical orientation of work equipment
- ✓ Room temperature: 20°C – 24°C
- ✓ Enough light

Make sure you work in an ergonomically sound position, even when working from home.

Tips for working from home

The first few days of working from home can take some getting used to – a lot of people are experiencing this right now. In terms of performance, work is more relaxed but also more productive than usual. This makes it easy to set up a **good routine**. However, if you work in your pyjamas, have the TV on in the background, or make lots of personal phone calls, you will end up not getting any work done, or risk producing poor quality work. This, in turn, can anger your manager or client, and lower your own motivation.

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Rule one: **Separate your work and leisure time**. If you try to mix the two, you will not be able to work properly or enjoy the free time you deserve. Anything distracting should have nothing to do with the work space. Before you start working, here are several tips to help you get started:

- **Have a sensible breakfast:** Since you are not being monitored, it can be tempting to move breakfast to your work space – answering emails with a cereal bowl in your hand, or biting into toast while coordinating appointments. Psychologically, however, it is advisable to eat breakfast before starting work.

- **Prepare for the day:** Before heading into the office, you probably wash up and brush your teeth. That's a good habit to continue before starting work in your home office. This helps keep your usual routine, and prepares you for the working day.

- **Dress properly:** You wouldn't go to the office in pyjamas, so you should avoid wearing them when working from home. Getting dressed as usual will help you feel motivated and ready for the working day.

- **A break means a break:** When it's lunchtime, change your location. Try not to sit in your work space and eat at your computer. If you take a proper break and eat in another room or area of the room, you will be much more productive when you return to work.

- **Maintain your working hours:** Make sure you're only working during your set working hours. It can be very tempting to write emails and finish up reports after your official work day is over, but try to resist. The laptop will still be there tomorrow.

Sticking to your normal work hours is the best thing for your health. Your body and mind need a decent break so that you'll be ready for another day of work tomorrow.

Summary

The best ways to work from home

- Create clear rules
- Trust yourself and your colleagues
- Set up a proper working space
- Pay attention to ergonomics
- Maintain a routine

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How to combine working from home with technology

Working from home can be easy, as long as your technology cooperates. Many people have their own PC or laptop, but sometimes that's not enough to fulfil your tasks. Depending on your occupation, work routine, and IT infrastructure, you might need a few additional tools.

Secure connection to the corporate network

Many companies operate their own infrastructure with an integrated data centre. For security reasons, it's important not to make the corporate network freely accessible online. Instead, software is used to create a tunnel over the public network to the private network. The created network is called a Virtual Private Network, or VPN for short.

This ensures that the network is private, because unlike the internet, not everyone can access it. It's virtual because it's a connected network but the connection isn't created by a dedicated cable. The tunnel created through the internet is created exclusively via the software. You don't necessarily have to have a company server on your own premises. Especially when it comes to small and medium-sized businesses, it's worth getting a cloud server – these can also be accessed through a VPN.

What is a VPN –
Virtual Private Network
https://www.ionos.co.uk/
digitalguide/server/know-how/
what-is-a-vpn-virtual-private-
network/

Rent a cloud server
https://www.ionos.co.uk/cloud/
cloud-servers

Note

VPNs are used in a variety of contexts these days. Resourceful internet users use this technique (in a legally dubious way) to trick streaming providers into providing them with content that is not actually available in their region due to licensing restrictions. Virtual private networks are also used to make internet connections more secure and anonymous. This is the same technology you will require to connect to a company network.

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The VPN program grants you **access to the enterprise infrastructure**. On the one hand, the software provides authentication: you will only be able to log in if you have a registered user account and you enter the correct password. On the other hand, the VPN client takes care of encryption for you. All information is encrypted so that no unauthorised users can read the sent data. If the virtual private network is set correctly, you will be able to access all the same files you normally would from the office.

A VPN connection creates a secure tunnel through the internet between the employee's PC and the company's server infrastructure.

There are other ways to access a network – which might also be of interest to freelancers. Many self-employed people are severely restricted by the COVID-19 outbreak, since they can no longer meet clients at their offices. With a remote desktop connection **you can remotely control another computer or server**. Using a dedicated protocol, the external computer can then be used as if it were your own. This is also a helpful solution during maintenance work, for example.

Setting up a remote desktop connection:
Guide for Windows
https://www.ionos.co.uk/digitalguide/server/know-how/remote-desktop-success-of-the-application/

Whether it's a VPN, a remote desktop connection, or a regular internet connection, sensitive corporate data should always be protected. Simple password protection is no longer sufficient. The best choice is to use **multi-factor authentication** (MFA), whereby not just a single feature is being queried for authentication (i.e. a password), but additional verification options have to be confirmed.

In most cases, however, two-factor authentication is enough. Users simply enter their username and password first, and are then asked for an additional password, which will be sent to them through a **second channel** for one-time login use.

Two-factor authentication:
protection for your accounts
https://www.ionos.co.uk/digitalguide/e-mail/e-mail-security/two-factor-authentication-protection-for-your-accounts/

This **one-time password** is sent or created using a text message, email, app notification, or through a special device. It is often a sequence of numbers that expire after a few minutes. The authentication system takes time to set up and can be irksome, but security is increased to such an extent that it is absolutely worth it, regardless of the circumstances. Additional security is extremely important, especially where an entire company can no longer come together in one place.

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Helpful tools

Working from home is a new, intimidating situation for many people. Familiar work routines are suddenly upended, and being separated from colleagues can be challenging. However, there's no need to worry: with a few small changes and the right tools, you should be able to achieve the same level of productivity and quality at home as you usually do when working from the office.

Even though your colleagues no longer sit opposite or right next door to you, this shouldn't mean you can't work collaborate on tasks and problems. There are many helpful collaboration tools to try. Many of these software solutions make it possible to work together easily – either on documents, presentations, or graphs. It is always clear who is working on which part so that you don't get in each other's way.

Note

Office work often involves the use of word processing programmes and spreadsheets, whether you're working at home or from the office. Modern office solutions not only offer excellent functions to match the program's core functionalities, but also allow collaboration through the cloud. Work the way you're used to with Microsoft Office 365, or try out the sleek, modern G Suite from Google.

Collaboration tools –
A comparison of the best software
https://www.ionos.co.uk/digitalguide/e-mail/technical-matters/collaboration-tools-a-comparison-of-the-best-solutions/

G Suite
Complete packet with Gmail for business
https://www.ionos.co.uk/office-solutions/g-suite

Microsoft 365
with setup service
https://www.ionos.co.uk/office-solutions/microsoft-office

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However, it's fair to say that **communication in your team** is more important than ever when working from home. There are also practical tools to achieve this, which don't involve using your phone all the time. With program's like Skype or a Skype alternative you can start a video call at any time. At the same time, you can chat with colleagues and clients. Communicating through text also has the advantage that everything can be saved and read again by colleagues.

When working together, however, you don't just exchange thoughts: you also exchange files. If you don't want to get lost in countless email attachments, you should set up a **shared storage space** with your colleagues. As previously mentioned, this can be done easily through an in-house server that everyone accesses via VPN. However, it is often easier to create a storage space over the cloud. This way, all team members always have the latest version available, no matter from where they access the files.

Store all your data in the cloud. This way, every employee has access to it from anywhere in the world.

Of course, traditional email traffic also continues to play a major role. Important information should be communicated by email. Email archives are usually easier to navigate than chat archives. The search can be refined and individual messages can also be sorted into different categories. Microsoft Outlook and similar Outlook alternatives usually include a calendar, address book, and notebook functions as standard features.

To be able to connect everything – collaboration, data exchange, project management – a good choice is Slack or a Slack alternative. Thanks to numerous interfaces, it's easy to bundle tasks. This means that you won't lose track even when working from home under stressful conditions.

Summary

What should home office technology consist of?

- Secure connection to the corporate network
- Secure logins with multi-factor authentication
- Use Software tools for communication and collaboration

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Collaborative team work even when working from home

Teamwork is based on good communication. You have to communicate effectively to make sure everyone pulls together. This applies just as much when working from home as when working in the office. However, at home, the **communication situation** is quite different and may require some getting used to at first.

Transparency is key

There are clear drawbacks to working from home – **you can't see** your colleagues. Small issues can suddenly appear more pressing: Why has a particular colleague not responded when your message was important? In an office, you could have noticed that a person may not have been at their desk or was making a phone call.

To compensate for this disadvantage, you should try to be as transparent as possible when working from home. Many of the chat or work collaboration software tools include an option to **set your status**. This is how colleagues can see when you're in a conference call and can't respond. You can solve other issues by using an automatic response: "I'm taking a short break." This helps to ensure that the interpersonal side of working together is not lost.

Checking in with colleagues

Consider what normal office life actually looks like: small conversations take place over and again, some of which are about specific tasks but others that may be private. These small conversations often fall away when working from home if you don't make a concrete effort to catch up with your colleagues. You should try your best to ensure you **check in with one another** regularly. Just like in a normal office, you don't necessarily have to do this with the entire team. Check in with your colleagues and friends through one-to-one conversations by chat or phone, so as not to disturb other colleagues.

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Contacting the right person

Make sure you are using the correct channels to interact with the right people. The more sensitive the information being exchanged, the more necessary it is to **check who you are communicating with**. Not all information will be suitable for all eyes, especially if there are non-corporate individuals in the group chats.

You should also consider the **potential disruption** of sending messages. If you are continually messaging the entire team with information that is only interesting or relevant to a few individuals, it can quickly become a nuisance. Every time a message is received (whether a chat message or email), you have to stop your workflow for a short time. Chatting can be an easy way to lose time.

Tips for video conferencing

If entire companies can no longer come to the office, as is happening to many businesses right now, **planning meetings becomes a challenge**. In that case, group calls must be used for telephone or video conferences instead. This is not always ideal, but if everyone follows a few rules, then these conversations can lead to good results.

One of the key aspects of normal conversations, but even more important during a virtual work meeting is to not **talk over people**! As soon as two people speak at the same time, it will be difficult to understand what someone has said. If you take this and other tips into account, you will be able to hold quality, productive conference calls.

> **Video conferencing:**
> Tips and tools for the everyday business
> https://www.ionos.co.uk/digitalguide/online-marketing/social-media/video-conferencing/

- **Avoid background noise:** Close the doors and ask family members to be quiet
- **Maintain professionalism:** Pay attention to your own appearance and background when the camera is switched on
- **Avoid speaking over people:** Make it known to the group that you intend to speak before doing so
- **Use a headset:** A microphone in front of your mouth reduces ambient noise
- **Mute your microphone:** If you don't have anything to contribute, microphones should stay muted
- **Remain attentive:** Don't do any other tasks during the conference call
- **Record:** Make sure a written record of everything said is kept

In general, you should try and keep virtual meetings as small as possible. If this cannot be done, and you have to add a lot of people to a conference call, assign certain roles. This will help ensure the majority of employees listen quietly instead of disturbing the flow of the call. When in doubt, appoint a speaker to read contributions sent to them through direct messages or chat.

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Stay productive

Keeping on top of work doesn't have to be done by phone, chat, or email. Many project management tasks can be mapped using the previously mentioned collaboration tools. Here, you can **graphically display workflows** or create a Kanban board.

Additionally, you can use the usual methods of maintaining productivity when working from home. In a remote office and crisis situation where it's easy to lose focus, effective working methods are even more important than usual. The focus is on effective time management. For example, the Pomodoro technique or the Getting Things Done method can help you keep on top of all your tasks.

Time management:
The 8 best methods for success
https://www.ionos.co.uk/
startupguide/productivity/
time-management-techniques/

Pomodoro technique:
Concentrate harder and be more productive at work
https://www.ionos.co.uk/
startupguide/productivity/
pomodoro-technique/

Getting Things Done (GTD):
The 5 step method explained
https://www.ionos.co.uk/
startupguide/productivity/
getting-things-done-gtd/

The 5 steps of the Getting Things Done method

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Capture	Clarify	Organise	Reflect	Engage
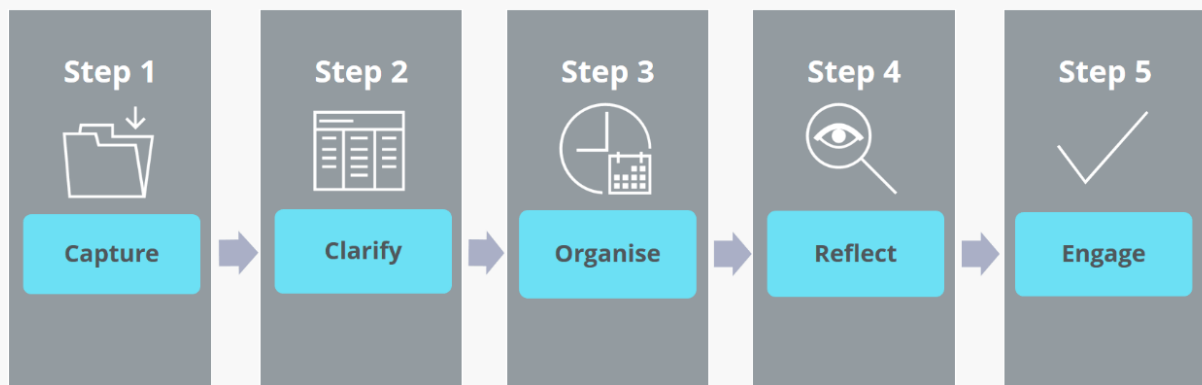
With the Getting Things Done method, you can stay on top of tasks when working from home.

Summary

How to work together effectively despite being at home

- Open and transparent communication
- Informing colleagues when you leave your workplace for a certain amount of time
- Ensure you are communicating with the right person
- Pay attention to video conferencing etiquette
- Introduce techniques for increased productivity

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How does insurance work when working from home?

At the moment, everything is moving extremely fast: How are you going to get your work done from home? You're probably giving less thought to what else could happen. What if an **employee has an accident at home**? Are they insured when working from home?

It's a good idea to have **general liability insurance in place**, which also applies to employees when they're working from home. This is often provided by your employer, but not always. However, this does not mean that all domestic misfortunes suddenly qualify as accidents during work hours. In order to be considered, the accident must be clearly linked to work. Someone who slips in the shower is just as uninsured as someone who cuts their finger peeling an apple on their lunch break.

If there is an accident related to work activities, you have to **document everything exactly** as it occurred. When dealing with the insurance company, they may be reluctant to believe you, so providing photos of the accident's location may help your case. This will allow you to credibly explain how the accident happened.

What about the **self-employed**? Here, it depends on whether and what insurance you have. Accident insurance is not compulsory for the self-employed. However, you have the option of registering with the statutory accident insurance office. In this case, the same rules apply to you as they do to regular employees. Alternatively, you can seek out private insurance.

In the case of **private accident insurance**, accidents that happen during leisure time are covered. This provides some additional flexibility. Private accident insurance is also available for employees who need additional insurance.

Home office –
are you insured in the event of an accident?
https://www.ionos.co.uk/
startupguide/productivity/
home-office-workers-insurance/

Summary

Are you insured when working from home?

- General liability insurance also applies to accidents when working from home
- The accident must have happened while working
- In case of doubt, you must be able to prove that the injury took place while working
- In addition, you can take out private accident insurance

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Can I write off working from home?

A particularly important question for the self-employed: How should working from home be categorised for tax purposes? If you are self-employed and require a **dedicated home office or study**, you can write off working from home. All costs incurred by setting up your working space can be claimed as operating expenses. Keeping any bills for furniture and work equipment purchases is important for writers, freelance journalists, tax consultants, and others in order to reduce their tax burden.

Writing off a home office from taxes:
Requirements and tips
https://www.ionos.co.uk/
startupguide/productivity/
home-office-tax-deduction/

Employees are also able to write off remote working expenses on their tax returns, provided they are contractually obligated to work from home.

To be able to write off working from home, there are several other conditions that must be met. Only rooms used **exclusively for work purposes** are deductible. Work areas must be clearly separated from the private household by a door. Additionally, a home office must be set up as a workspace; it cannot also be used for leisure. An office corner in your living room will not be accepted by HMRC.

Summary

Who can deduct remote work expenses from their taxes?

- Self-employed individuals and freelancers who depend on working from home
- Employees whose contracts state they must work from home
- Only dedicated office rooms may be deducted

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How to set up a home office when you live with children

Many schools and public institutions have chosen to close their doors in an attempt to mitigate the spread of Sars-CoV-2. **Schools, day-care facilities, and nurseries** have all been affected, which means that little ones have to be looked after at home. This leaves many people with no choice: they have to work from home with their children around. In addition to work, you also have to take care of babies, toddlers, or teenagers. This can quickly become stressful – the children don't have your full attention and neither does your work. However, with some planning you can master this situation.

For many schoolchildren, the coronavirus crisis may seem like an extended school holiday. However, just because you're stuck indoors doesn't mean that lessons should be cancelled. Many schools **send out assignments and teaching materials digitally** to their students. Of course, this does not replace proper classes and may not occupy the children properly for multiple hours a day. However, as a parent, it's a good idea to encourage your children to engage with their learning materials as much as possible.

Some schools have introduced digital teaching, where teachers instruct students through a video conference. However, not every school or household can manage this technologically. **Independent learning** is the most suitable way of schooling for the majority of households.

The range of subjects covered does not have to be limited to school materials. You can take this opportunity to let your child grapple with topics they are really interested in – whether that's storytelling, music, or technical subjects. There are many resources available online, mostly free of charge, which students can use to **learn new things in a fun way**. You can also use the TV for learning purposes: there are plenty of channels which broadcast educational programmes suitable for children on a daily basis.

But what should you do if your child is still demanding your attention? Many people have no choice but to combine childcare and working from home, so **clear rules** are extremely important. These should be communicated depending on your child's age. Make it clear to the little ones that when you are working, you may not be disturbed. Closing the door to your (improvised) study can help set a clear signal. Try explaining to your child how important it is for you to concentrate in order to do your work.

Either way, you should set up **regular breaks** throughout your day when working from home. If you have to juggle keeping an eye on your family and working from home, then breaks are even more important. Leave your desk space and go to communal spaces during your break times: this way you can take a break from your job and also pay more attention to your family.

Working from home with your child
https://www.ionos.co.uk/startupguide/productivity/home-office-with-kids/

Tip

Remember that the current situation is also difficult for your children. It may be worth giving in and occasionally bending some rules that are normally in place. If things like sweets, TV time, or gaming consoles are usually strictly regulated, it might be a good idea to be a little more lenient during this time in order to get your work done and keep the peace.

Summary

How to combine working from home with watching your kids:

- Motivate children to learn
- Inspire independent learning
- Set clear rules
- Set family break times

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Working from home and your health

During the COVID-19 crisis, many people are paying more attention than usual to their health. After all, that's why as many people as possible are working from home during this period. However, even if you isolate yourself from the virus, you still need to consider your overall health. On the one hand, **hygiene** plays an important role. Make sure your work space where you spend a lot of time stays very clean. Wipe down surfaces regularly. This includes your keyboard and mouse, which most people are in contact with several hours a day.

Note

If you are sick, you don't have to work, even if you're working from home. Let your employer know you're taking a sick day before you spend a whole day sitting in front of your computer unfocused and in unwell. If you need a sick note, you can phone your doctor and have one posted to you – many clinics are not seeing patients right now due to the crisis and the enormous burden already on doctors. Focus on getting well and healthy before getting back to work.

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Don't forget to move

There are certain health hazards that working from home entail which shouldn't be underestimated. Screen work is associated with **long hours spent sitting** and can therefore lead to various problems – primarily postural damage and head or back pain. An ergonomically designed workplace helps, but it's not the only measure you should take when it comes to your health.

At the very least, try to incorporate some exercise. Stand up in between tasks and **walk around your apartment**. Don't forget to stretch. Let blood flow to your arms and legs. This sounds extremely trivial, but these small steps are vital to incorporate more movement when you're spending days indoors.

Exercise at work:
Tips and exercises for the office
https://www.ionos.co.uk/startupguide/productivity/exercise-in-the-office/

Working out to create balance

During your lunch break and after work, incorporating a **fitness routine** into your day could be beneficial. The fact that options are extremely limited due to the coronavirus pandemic is understandably hindering. Fitness and yoga studios are closed, dance classes and physical therapy are cancelled. Although in some places, it is still possible to jog alone outside or do other sports, it is hard to say how much longer these outdoor activities will be permitted.

However, you can still stay fit from within your own four walls, and **you don't need any special equipment** for it. YouTube and other platforms have plenty of free workout and yoga classes to choose from. These classes are video-based and have instructors who will tell you what to do and provide examples. Treat your body to some exercise to compensate for the physical burden of working from home – either using your own routine or an online workout class.

Tip

How can you stay healthy when working from home?

- Observe general hygiene
- Ensure you're getting enough exercise/movement
- Change sitting positions regularly
- Balance your day with some fitness
- Make sure your home office is well ventilated
- Drink plenty of water
- Eat balanced meals regularly

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