

WORK FROM HOME QUICK TIPS

SPEED, SPACE, AND SANITY

ORGANIZE YOUR SPACE – AND YOUR BRAIN

Improve your organization [and your mood](#) by keeping your WFH workstation clean and neat. Here are some of our favorite tips for bringing order (and sanity) back:

- ❑ [Flexjobs](#) suggests a wire management system or tube to keep cords under control – this comes with a safety bonus
- ❑ [Real Simple](#) offers a 10-step guide to cleaning your office
- ❑ [Small Business Trends](#) gives you actionable items for decluttering
- ❑ [How Stuff Works](#) touts organizing your home office to improve productivity with a “clean sweep” of your desk
- ❑ Dedicate some time for “spring cleaning” of your office and other spaces

THE NEED FOR SPEED

Ever feel like you're getting in your own way? You might be slowing down your internet connection without knowing it:

- ❑ Go old school with an ethernet connection for your primary devices (like your TV) – it's faster, but also more secure and reliable
- ❑ Dig into your data cap – make sure you know what your internet plan allows, since maxing out your data limit will likely slow your speed
- ❑ Speaking of your internet plan...negotiate! Ask for promotions, discounts, and loyalty offers, and look at other providers.
- ❑ Reposition your router close to the middle of your house on the floor that you most use the internet
- ❑ Reset your router and modem every month – yep, it's the old “turn it off and back on” trick. Make it easier by plugging your router/modem into a programmable timer that restarts while you're sleeping
- ❑ Move on – it might be time to replace your router with a newer model

FAST FOCUS

Some days, the sounds of your kids in a Zoom class or your partner playing their “work music” gets to be too much. Concentrate on these ideas:

- ❑ Noise cancelling headphones – they're not just for plane trips!
- ❑ Drown things out with white noise – if the quiet is too quiet, check out Spotify or the like for white noise playlists (there's even a coffee shop sound-alike)

- ❑ Keep tabs on your tabs – delete or relocate non-work-related browser tabs
- ❑ Switch up your workspace – a new location can reset your focus

SOUNDS GOOD

Working from home shouldn't sound like you're in a construction zone (or a Kindergarten class!). You already know how to use the mute button, but you can also improve your calls with these quick fixes:

- ❑ Upgrade your ear buds to a headset (they're in supply again!)
- ❑ Eliminate background noise when it's raining cats and dogs – consider apps like [Krisp](#) that drown out the chatter behind you

Having signal issues?

- ❑ Use Wi-Fi for calls – [Techlicious](#) gives you the 411 on Wi-Fi calling for a variety of carriers, along with a how-to guide for iOS and Android phones
- ❑ Try a cell signal booster (also called a repeater) – [PC Mag](#) reviews their picks for low and high budget boosters
- ❑ Look into a femtocell (also called a microcell) – [USA Today](#) explains these boosters that plug into your router (your carrier might even loan you one!)
- ❑ For a potential quick fix, remove your phone case – it could be interfering with your signal strength
- ❑ Stay in charge – keep your battery charged above 25% for optimal performance, which includes your phone's ability to receive the signal
- ❑ Refresh your signal by switching to airplane mode for a few seconds then switching back

IN THE BEST LIGHT

[Research](#) has shown that video calls boost engagement and shorten meeting times, so what's not to love? Keep your video image on point:

- ❑ [Flexjobs](#) suggests investing in a quality webcam and using a tripod to improve the look and sound of your video conference
- ❑ Repurpose your smartphone or tablet as your new webcam
- ❑ Check your light source – opt for light on your face, and don't sit with a window behind you
- ❑ Speaking of light, the [BBC](#) recommends front-facing natural light to look your best, as well as keeping the camera eye-level or higher
- ❑ Don't forget housekeeping – clean off your camera lens periodically
- ❑ [PC Magazine](#) suggests showing up early so you can preview your camera appearance – they also give tips on backgrounds, camera height, and more

- ❑ Most of all, don't forget that you are on camera – staying engaged and energized lets others in the meeting know they're important to you

CONNECT WITH PEOPLE AGAIN

Staying tuned in to your coworkers can help boost productivity and teamwork. And in a remote environment, this connection becomes even more important. [The Society for Human Resources Management](#) surveyed companies to see how they are using technology to keep in touch. Check out these strategies:

- ❑ Host an online story time for kids or a pet parade (it's fun, trust us!)
- ❑ Create a "feel good" Slack channel dedicated to positive news
- ❑ Virtual pizza parties are a perfect way to get the toppings you want
- ❑ Join an office book club

And, with the spotlight on celebrations being a bit dimmer than usual, add some sparkle back by honoring milestones at work. Sharing successes and special days can bring coworkers together and keep them connected:

- ❑ Be big on birthdays – send birthday cards via snail mail or make it a group effort with a virtual card from [GroupGreeting.com](#)
- ❑ All about the shout-out – give credit for a great idea during a team meeting or mention a recent success to appreciate your colleagues
- ❑ Plan a virtual surprise for a promotion or retirement party – have everyone wear a funny hat or use a custom Zoom background for the honoree

BETTER BREAKS

Remote workers often forget to take breaks, especially when working from home. Do yourself a favor and build breaks into your schedule. The [CDC guide](#) on taking physical breaks recommends simple, medium-level, and complex activities like:

- ❑ Airplane stretches – not just for plane rides anymore
- ❑ Chair Tai Chi
- ❑ The Chicken Dance (yes, really)
- ❑ Deskercise

[Psychology Today](#) offers some science-based strategies, including:

- ❑ Take a break that feels different from your work (get outside and away from the screen)
- ❑ Try "productive procrastination," like unloading the dishwasher
- ❑ Substitute a morning break, which can improve your focus and productivity more than a break in the afternoon