

Manage work-from-home stress



As COVID-19 continues to disrupt our routines, many people find themselves working at home. Working from home can bring on different types of stress that require new ways of coping. Here are a few reasons working from home may cause stress and how to manage it.



Blurred lines

You may appreciate the much shorter commute now that you work from your kitchen, bedroom or living room. But it can be much harder to disconnect from work now that you are working and living in the same space. Here are some tips to create healthy boundaries:

- Start and end your workday at set times.
- Keep your workspace limited to one area of the home.
- If you can, turn off notifications for your email after your workday is done.
- Do a midday activity or take 30 minutes for lunch away from your desk.
- Try a walk or other light activity after your workday is done. This can help you to relax and get out of "work mode."



What day is it?

Working from home and trying to limit your exposure to COVID-19 can mean a lot of time spent in the same spaces. Try these tips to break up the days:

- Schedule regular time out of the home. Go for walks, visit a park or just take a drive.
- Visit new outdoor spaces in your area like gardens, outdoor malls or town centers.
- Plan regular picnics and barbecues at nearby parks.
- If you're comfortable, work for a few hours from the patio of a local coffee shop.



Unexpected “coworkers”

For many parents, working from home during school or childcare closures can be a stressful combination. Here are some tips for working from home while your children are home too:

- Be honest with what you can do. Don't overcommit and keep in touch with your boss about your workload.
- Be easy on yourself. You may have to relax some of your usual rules or routines as a parent. These are not normal times, so it's OK to adjust your parenting to this new normal. Just try to remember your kids need a loving parent, not a perfect one.
- Block out time on your work calendar when you know your children will need your undivided attention, like before naps or at mealtimes. If you have a co-parent at home, plan your schedules.
- Wake up early and get some work done before anyone else is up. This can help you feel less stressed later in the day once the kids are up and need you.
- Have a sense of humor about it. If your kid interrupts a work call, try to laugh and see the humor in it.
- Ask for help from your loved ones and offer to lend a hand when you can.



Focus on the benefits

Work from home stress is real. Focusing on the benefits of working from home can help you see the big picture. Here are some benefits to working from home:

- If you used to drive to an office, you can save money on gas and reduce your carbon footprint.
- Working from home makes it easier to make wholesome, healthy lunches for yourself. This way, you'll also spend less money dining out.
- Avoiding a busy office or stressful commute can be a relief to those who are neurodivergent or have anxiety.
- A shorter commute can mean more time to spend on you, even if that just means a few extra minutes of sleep every morning.

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