

Working from Home

The Feathered Paths Action Plan

Working from home can be a blessing or a curse. It offers incredible freedom and the ability to manage a busy life more comfortably. But as someone who has worked from home for many years, I know how easy it can be to fall into the 'cursed' side of working from home.

The 'curse' is where we find ourselves in our jim jams at 3pm, staring into space and sipping a cold cuppa whilst our to do list is ever growing and just not getting actioned.

To avoid this cursed place, we need to set boundaries that release the magic of working from home - the creativity, the accomplishments, the amazing organisation as well as a clean house. The boundaries basically give us the ability to operate like a superwoman without even breaking a sweat. So below is an easy plan to follow and handy tips to unleash the magic if you work from home;

Set a morning routine

- Always get dressed
- Wear something from your work wardrobe - you don't need to be fully suited and booted but think smart casual, not boardies and flip flops.
- Brush your teeth and your hair and if you usually wear make-up/ jewellery - wear it.
- Plan your breakfast in advance and make as much of it as you can in advance.
- Do the same for snacks, lunch and drinks.

Work Habits

- Set 'movement' alarms on your phone to get you up and moving at least every couple hours, even if it's only for a few minutes.
- Do your most challenging or beneficial tasks first.
- Don't open your inbox until 9.30 - use the first half hour of your day for your biggest priority before your inbox is filled with everyone else's priorities.
- Leave the easier tasks to later in the day when your brain is beginning to tire.
- If you use Teams - change your settings so that you show as 'Do not disturb' anytime you are in a meeting.
- Try email batching - check your emails 3 to 4 times a day and action any new emails straight away. Checking back and forth numerous times a day wastes time. An email rarely needs actioning in under an hour. If it does, that person should have called you instead.

Ways to take a break

- When you take a break - play music - dance while the tea bag stews.
- Do something physical in your lunch break, even if it's just putting some washing away.
- If your mind wanders, get up - move around.
- Take your lunch break - block it out every day in your diary.
- Ban distractions from your working area - TV's, people, hobbies - ban them from your work area but enjoy them during your breaks.

Health and energy

- Keep healthy snacks on your desk - fruit, nuts, anything containing high energy and goodness.
- Fill a water bottle each day and keep it on your desk to stay hydrated. Add ice cubes, a lemon slice or some squash if you struggle to drink water.
- Get outside as much and as often as you can. If there is even the slightest ray of sunshine, make time in your day to get some fresh air.
- When it's a hot day, get outside before you start work - walk the dog, eat breakfast on the patio or do yoga in the garden.
- If you're able to, leave the house on your lunch break. Meet a friend for lunch, grab a coffee, take a walk or nip to the shop.
- Find a place you enjoy going to often with no particular responsibilities when you're there. Go here regularly after work. Somewhere like a coffee shop or your best friend's house.
- Find reasons to move and leave your desk at regular intervals. Even a trip to the loo or answering the door counts as a quick leg stretch and mini screen break.

Planning and Organisation

- Add planning time to your diary at the end of the week. Use that time to fill your diary for the next week. Write down your project and work priorities, block out the time for completing them next week in your diary.
- Plan your evenings and add them to your diary - cooking dinner, taking a bath, going to an exercise class. Whatever you're doing after work - plan it in and stick to it.
- Keep an eye on how much time you spend in the house. Put things in your diary that are reasons to get out and about.
- Use the time you would have spent commuting to the office to do something for yourself - both before and after your working day. Don't just sleep or watch TV, make the most of the time you have gained.



Stay Connected

- Add 'check-in' times to your diary. Use this time to make a call and check in with a colleague.
- Plan a morning or a day for working without sending emails. Try to tackle as many things as you can on the phone, instead of email.
- Use a mixture of video conferencing and calling on the good old fashioned dog and bone.
- Embrace small talk on calls and allow others to do the same.
- If you have friends or family who also work from home, call them to check in.

Resources;

[Working from home and hybrid working | Acas](#)

[6 tips to tackle working from home - Every Mind Matters - NHS.](#)

[Mental health and working remotely | Mind](#)

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