

Working Remotely and Loving It

By Kelli Richards



We're living in unprecedented times where in the space of a few days, our lives and work have been thrown into upheaval. The "Shelter in Place" mandate has forced many to work from home, a transition that's foreign to many. But as someone who's been working from home (by design) for 22 years now, I can attest that there are many ways to set yourself up for success in the current climate. Who knows? You may wind up loving it as I do – and it could shift how you work in the long-term once we start to return to a sense of more normal business operations.

Establish a Dedicated Office Space

The most important thing may just be creating an area in your home that's just for your work. If you're lucky to have a whole room you can turn into your office with a door you can close while you're working for privacy and focus, that's the ideal. But if not, then maybe you've got a desk/chair set up somewhere in the living room that can be your

work space (ideally with a view to the outside). Some have the added challenge of having kids at home just now with schools closed. If so, it's especially key to establish a quiet area, and set healthy boundaries where you won't be interrupted while you're concentrating on getting your work done.

Tips for Working at Home (and Staying Productive)

Self-discipline is key when you don't have someone watching over you or keeping you accountable to getting tasks done as you may be used to having at the office. So you'll need to set up systems and structures that will serve you in staying productive and achieving results.

Here are a few things I've found to be helpful for me:

- Ensure you've got a good quality chair and be sure to stand and stretch/walk regularly.
- Establish a schedule/routine and stick to it daily as much as possible, including work hours (just as you would if you were still going to the office – exercise, nutrition, dress, etc).
- Identify your most important priorities the night before for the



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next day so when you get started you'll know what you're focused on—tackle those priorities when you're at your peak.

- Practice work sprints where you work on a given task for no more than 90 minutes, then get up and stretch/walk, get some water & a snack if need be. Take breaks throughout the day.
- Get out and take a walk outside at some point in the day; the fresh air will invigorate you.
- Do video calls as much as possible vs phone – it'll help you and others feel more connected.
- Stay in touch with your colleagues on video or phone calls, via text; again, stay connected (!).
- Know when to call it a day and close your office door; shift gears to focus on yourself & family.

Embrace the Benefits

- You don't have to commute, save money (no gas), you have less stress – and more time!
- You get to work from your home – hopefully a place you've created as a haven & a beautiful sanctuary that you love being in.
- You're likely to be more productive with the extra time you've got in not sitting in traffic, and with fewer distractions that you'd normally have in your work environment.
- You can be more relaxed with your clothing though still dress professionally for video calls.
- You can wear jeans and slippers while you're working if you want to; it's pretty liberating.
- You can have working lunches with your colleagues on video and stay connected that way.
- You can now reach busy execs who are frequently traveling or have packed calendars; don't hesitate to contact those you've been wanting to connect with and schedule conversations.
- In normal times, I run errands and do my shopping when others are at work; a real time-saver.
- At the end of the day, you'll have an easier transition to segueing into your personal life.
- In applying these tips, you'll find you can adjust and be as productive as when you're in your normal work environment – if not more so. Like me you may find you love working from home when all is said and done and may choose to work remotely at least some of the time when things shift back to normal in the work world. Reach out to me for additional ideas and support.

Kelli Richards, founder and Managing Director of The All Access Group is the exclusive provider of business consulting, mentoring, and strategic connections editorial in Los Altos Hills magazine. For more information, visit allaccessgroup.com.



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