



Working From Home.

Welcome to this week's discussion.

The focus this week relates to fatigue that may be experienced when working from home.

Working from home might seem to be the ideal remedy for tensions between your career and personal life. Who wouldn't love flexible hours, no commute, fewer office distractions and more time with family?

Well, not quite everyone. Recent studies have found that those who regularly work from home tend to be online more and work longer hours than their colleagues at the office. For some people, working from home may actually do little to reduce exhaustion and stress — and could even prove to be more taxing.

Home working clearly isn't a one-size-fits-all style of working. Members of the millennial generation who like to blend their work and personal lives often cope well with telecommuting, as do highly organised individuals who manage time and prioritise tasks effectively.

Home working alleviated exhaustion among people with lower levels of work-family conflict, according to a recent study. Some people like to integrate multiple aspects of their lives and can juggle it all without a lot of stress.

But those who prefer a clear demarcation line between job and family may struggle to establish boundaries when both are in the same location.

The flip side of flexibility is that many workers feel pressured — often by their peers — to be available anytime and anywhere. Learning how to disconnect is a new skill for many people.

Managers also need to help employees set limits because home workers who don't know when to stop working may be at risk of burning out and becoming less productive.

If you are working from home, you and your line manager should discuss expectations about work schedules, hours of availability and response times, and then try to reach common ground.

Some home workers develop strategies on their own to avoid burnout. Many set up designated areas in their homes, display “do not disturb” signs to prevent interruptions, establish routine stopping and starting times, and take regular lunch and breaks. To avoid perceptions of always being on call, some home workers answer emails whenever they find it convenient, but take care not to send them off until after 08:00 the next day.

Team can establish their own “blueprints” for how they'll work together, including the hours when members are available via email or phone, the days when everyone should convene in a conference call, and the protocol for updating each other.

Individuals need to learn to prioritise throughout the day and say some things can wait for tomorrow.



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Remote Connect Link

<https://networkrail.sharepoint.com/sites/myconnect/routeservices/Pages/ITsupport.aspx>

Tips for working at home.

- Be prepared to 'learn' how to work at home. (It may take a while)
- If you can, set up a routine and stick to it.
 - Start and finish at the same time.
 - Have regular breaks at set times.
 - Set up a 'do not disturb' process if possible.
- Discuss your needs with the whole family and gain buy in.
- Learn to switch off.
 - If possible have a designated area for working.
 - Force yourself to switch off laptops and phones at day end.
- Discuss your needs with your line manager and peers.
 - What hours you are working.
 - How you prefer to be contacted.
- Make use of available technology (Remote Connect link above)
- Remember to exercise, eat, sleep and keep hydrated
- Keep in contact with your peers and line manager.
 - Video calls help provide a 'Sense of belonging'.
- Remember that you have a home life too.
 - If possible work around children's needs.
 - Keep the laptop and phone out of sight when 'off duty'.
 - You do not necessarily have to work '9to5'.
- Think of your other team members who may be home working.
 - Respect their routines.
 - Answer their communications when they are 'online'.
- Set yourself daily, achievable goals to create achievements.
- Give yourself 'permission to stop' at the end of your day.
- Ensure your workplace is comfortable, suitable and safe.
- Get dressed and limit social media during work periods.
- BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY – do not let work overwhelm you.

Discuss in your teams:

- Can you work well on your own at home? Can you share your tips to help those who may struggle?
- When at home working have you sometimes feels it was all too much? Could you benefit from some of the tips above?
- How can your team support those working from home? Can you set up an internal team support group?
- Think about and discuss all of the things that home workers can do and how we can all care for each other.