



## Working well while working from home

BY BERNADETTE MAZUREK MELNYK

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**Is your commute a shuffle down the hall in slippers and a robe? Many of us could be mixing work and home for the long haul, making this a good time to evaluate your at-home work life so you can stay well, calm and focused.**

Working from home has gone from an emergency strategy meant to last a few weeks to a revolution in the way we do business. Now many people report that they would like to continue working from home even after the COVID-19 crisis settles down. If you plan to work from home for the long haul, it's time to develop new long-term strategies to stay well and cope with stress.

### Check and address your stress

Make a daily habit to ask yourself how you are feeling and check your stress level. Instead of waiting until work time is over, try to release stress regularly throughout the day. Try a five-minute meditation, take five slow deep breaths at regular intervals throughout the day, or write in a journal about what is on your mind. Start each day by counting a few people or things you are grateful for and reading from a book on positive thinking for five minutes. This self-care time will help you, and it will help you be more present for others. If you are stressed or anxious to the point that it is starting to interfere with your functioning, reach out to your health care provider, your employee assistance program or a mental health counselor. Make it a habit to check in with two people from your workplace and social network daily so that you feel connected. They will feel cared for, too!

## Guard your sleep

Set a regular schedule for getting up and going to sleep. Shoot for at least seven hours per night. It's ideal to continue to get up and go to bed at the same time as you would if you were still going in to the office. Also, keep in mind that stress takes a toll on your body; you may need more sleep than usual, and that's OK.

## Eat healthily

You now have more access to your food supply than you would in your office, so be conscious about how and what you are eating. Use the 80/20 rule: Compose your diet of 80% healthy foods and 20% "want" foods. It can be easy to fall into the pattern of grabbing a little food every time you are in the kitchen, but those nibbles can pile on a lot of extra calories. Instead, set yourself regular snack times and have a healthy snack, such as piece of fruit, a low-fat yogurt or a cup of popcorn. Drink at least eight eight-ounce glasses of water per day; even slight dehydration can make you feel tired.

## Schedule physical activity into your day

Try to get at least 30 minutes a day of exercise five days a week. Even 11 minutes a day has heart health benefits. Schedule short bursts of physical activity throughout your day, and make sure to vary your routine so you don't get bored. This is a great time to consult a personal wellness coach for encouragement, resources and advice about what kind of exercise is best for you.

## Beware of the chair

Sitting for long periods of time drains your energy and has adverse effects on your cardiovascular system and metabolism. Try getting up and moving around once an hour to sustain your energy throughout the day. Put on some music and dance for five to 10 minutes, lift weights or household objects, walk up and down the stairs or take a quick walk outside. If you're home with children, ask them to join you. You can construct a standing desk at home by piling up books or placing your laptop on a low stool on top of a table. Invest in a comfortable, ergonomic chair for when you do have to sit.

