TELEWORKING EFFECTIVELY

TOOLKIT FOR EMPLOYEES
TIPS TO TELEWORK EFFECTIVELY

Telecommuting may represent a solution to a better work/life balance, as well as gaining autonomy and enjoying greater flexibility. However, telework also comes with its own set of challenges, such as social isolation, distractions in the home and trouble disconnecting from work.

This guide is a summary of our best tips and practices to work efficiently from home. It is a first iteration, and we will add to and amend the content as we continue to learn more about telework along the way.

Please note that a guide for managers on managing remote employees and hybrid teams is also available.

### BEING IMPACTFUL

- Setup your virtual and physical workspace
- Establish your work schedule
- Track your progress and take accountability

### MAINTAINING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

- Establish a morning and evening routine
- Take breaks throughout the day
- Check-in with yourself

### STAYING CONNECTED

- Always communicate
- Think constant collaboration
- Keep up with social interactions
BEING IMPACTFUL

YOUR SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Virtual Workplace
- Tips and guidelines for teleworking are posted on the Information Technology page.

Physical Workplace
- Choose your workspace with care. Look for:
  - A safe space to work. Good ventilation, proper lighting, comfortable furniture and good ergonomics are just a few things to consider when it comes to safety.
  - A designated space with relative privacy and free of major distractions.
  - A clean and organized space stocked with work essentials (laptop, notebook, pens, etc.)

ESTABLISH YOUR WORK SCHEDULE

- Working hours: Whether you are in the office or at home, your schedule should have a start and ending time. Make sure you stick to it by starting on time and logging off at the time you set. Communicate your schedule with your team.
- Identify your productive times: You know when you are most productive so schedule your day around those productive times.
- Set daily to dos: Breakdown goals into smaller daily tasks. Limit it to 3-5 daily tasks, depending on what you are doing that day (meetings, trainings, etc.)

Additional Tips

Set appointments in your Outlook calendar: Whether you are doing some research, working on a process guide or going through your emails, add tasks and projects as an appointment in your calendar. This will help you keep on top of everything and ensure you’ve put time aside to be productive.

Use Teams to set your working status: Use the Teams status feature to set your status and message that people will see when they look you up or message you. For example, “Lunch noon – 1 pm”.

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS AND TAKE ACCOUNTABILITY

Finding motivation and managing time is not always easy when working from home. With a shift in perspective, a little practice, and some tips, you can achieve this.

- Organize regular check-ins with your supervisor: Depending on your role, this may be quick daily check-ins or biweekly video calls. Take this opportunity to share how you feel, share project status and ask for guidance and feedback.
- Set yourself a reward system: Choose a reward system for each major milestone, whether it’s for completing a more complex task or achieving a bigger goal. This will help track your progress and keep you motivated.
- Take ownership of your personal and professional development: Explore workshops and training sessions offered by the University at https://www.uottawa.ca/human-resources/learning.

Some Tips for Home Ergonomics
- For a good posture, use a desk or table and avoid the couch or your bed.
- Follow the 20/20/20 rule. Every 20 minutes, look at something that is 20 feet (6 meters) away from you, for at least 20 seconds.
- Change your working positions often, take regular breaks and fit in some stretching.

For more information on ergonomics and resources available at the University, visit https://www.uottawa.ca/human-resources/health/ergonomics.
MAINTAINING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

When teleworking, work-life balance can have a bit of a blurrier line. We’re sharing some of our best practices on this topic.

ESTABLISH A MORNING AND EVENING ROUTINE

One easy way to achieve work-life balance is starting and ending your day with things that you love and make you feel relaxed. This can be life-changing for so many people once they commit time in the day for themselves. Morning and evening routines come in all shapes and sizes. We’ve provided a few ideas here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morning Routine</th>
<th>Evening Routine Ideas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your morning routine should help you prepare to take on the day. A few ideas include:</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Taking a slow coffee break</td>
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<td>▪ Reading for 30 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Making a healthy smoothie</td>
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<td>Your evening routine should help you unwind after a busy day and get you relaxed before bed. A few ideas include:</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Listening to a podcast</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Connecting with a friend or loved one</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Going for a 30-minute walk</td>
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TAKE BREAKS THROUGHOUT THE DAY

It can be difficult to remember to take breaks. Use your Outlook calendar to turn breaks and lunch time into appointments so you get regular reminders. You can also block time on your calendar for exercise, fresh air or just time to step away from your workspace.

CHECK-IN WITH YOURSELF

It’s important to check in with yourself and be mindful of how you are feeling. Here are a few self-care questions to ask yourself every day:

1. How do I feel at this moment?
2. What are the positives in my life?
3. What am I thankful for?
4. Do I have enough quiet time?
5. What is making me feel down?
6. What scares me? How does it hold me back?
7. What am I putting off?
8. Is there negativity I can cut out of my life?
9. What new activities do I want to try?
10. Who or what inspires me?

Don’t forget to also check-in with others within your team.

For information regarding the resources available to employees, consult the University of Ottawa’s health and wellness resources.
STAYING CONNECTED
We’ve prepared a few tips to help you build and maintain meaningful connections with your team members and other stakeholders at the University.

ALWAYS COMMUNICATE AND THINK CONSTANT COLLABORATION
Effective communication is at the core of every high-functioning team. It helps relay information, build relationships, and create trust, among other things. We’ve put together a list of best communication practices when teleworking.

Align your intended message with the appropriate communications channel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMAIL</th>
<th>INSTANT MESSAGING</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
<th>VIDEO CALL</th>
<th>“TEAMS” GROUP</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-urgent questions</td>
<td>Urgent questions</td>
<td>Urgent questions</td>
<td>Team meetings</td>
<td>Collaborative work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information sharing</td>
<td>Informal discussions</td>
<td>Sensitive situations</td>
<td>Difficult conversations</td>
<td>Discussion threads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project updates</td>
<td>Information sharing</td>
<td>Formal discussions</td>
<td>Formal discussions</td>
<td>Ideas sharing</td>
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Be thoughtful about everyone’s time
- Designate a specific day and time for recurrent meetings.
- Create an online chat to replicate the more spontaneous office chat and questions.
- Use a “parking lot” to document issues you didn’t have time to address during meetings.
- Make meetings 5 to 10 minutes shorter so everyone can have a quick break before their next meeting.
- Consider an “open status policy” (similar to an “open-door policy”) where your online status in Microsoft Teams (busy, away, available, etc.) is accurate so everyone knows when they can contact you.

Holding effective virtual meetings
- Set an agenda for meetings so participants know what will be discussed, what is needed from them and how much time is allotted to each item.
- Be present by turning on your video (even just a few minutes) and lean into the conversation.
- Practice active listening by making sure there’s time and opportunity for everyone to speak and be heard. A good listener shows interest, asks questions and is respectful.
- Document and share any decisions made as well as next steps, at the end of each meeting.

KEEP UP WITH SOCIAL INTERACTIONS
Attending team meetings and events in person is a great way to ensure that employees do not feel isolated. When teleworking, scheduling time for a virtual team activity is a great way to keep connected. Here are a few ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Your Meetings with a Virtual Icebreaker</th>
<th>Socialize Over Group Chat</th>
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<td>An icebreaker is an activity intended to help team members “warm up” for the work ahead, learn more about one another and strengthen their sense of team cohesiveness. The virtual icebreaker can take the form of a game, a learning activity, a competition or an exercise.</td>
<td>Group chat is an ideal way for teams to stay in touch. Set up a chat called #social-telework where everyone can discuss anything but the projects you’re working on.</td>
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<th>Virtual Morning Tea or Coffee</th>
<th>Walking Challenge</th>
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<td>BYOC (bring your own coffee), turn on your video and chat with your team.</td>
<td>Ask your team to install a fitness-tracking app on their phone and set challenges. For example, who can do the most steps in a week? Create a leaderboard to track performances.</td>
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