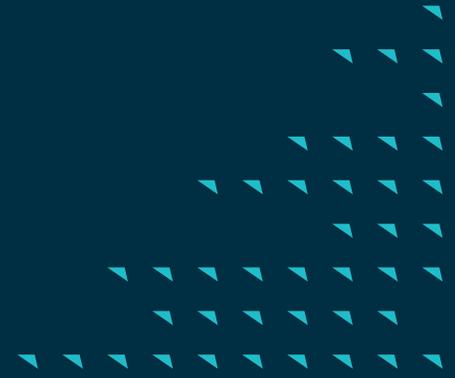


Tips for Managing the New Normal of Remote Work



As employers, your ability to support a telecommuting work force is about to be tested like never before as a result of the focused attempts to increase social distancing and address the coronavirus pandemic.

Even the most seasoned remote workers may be challenged during these tough times with other adults working at home as well as children and pets vying for attention day in and day out. Before this week gets the best of them, here are some tips you can share to help your telecommuting employees manage the unknown and unavoidable while balancing priorities and communicating effectively.

1 Create a Daily Routine

Every member of the household can benefit from setting a schedule and sticking to it, especially on week days. Suggest employees maintain regular office hours and school schedules as much as possible. Schools are starting to post sample schedules and remote learning activities to help parents who are not accustomed to managing this daily. Recommend employees and their families take the time to plan and establish schedules and routines that work for all members of the household.

2 Maintain Pre-Work and Post-Work Routines

While daily routines are going to be different, maintaining a pre-work and post-work routine can help create a sense of normalcy in the household. Suggest that employees continue getting ready for work every day to the extent possible and maintain what was their normal morning routine, including activities like exercise and meal-prep. Keeping a post-work routine is equally as important. Suggest they end their day at the same time and shut down their workspace. Creating separation between work and home will help to keep their daily life on track. If they are not sure what to do after work, suggest they consider activities like reading, games, learning a new skill, or getting caught up on household chores. Use the time often spent driving around or getting to and from work to accomplish bigger projects instead.

3 Technology

If you are new to working from home, it's important to make sure everything works efficiently. Access to consistent Wi-Fi and the ability to use all of your tools effectively is important in maintaining work habits and staying connected to your team. Make sure you have your chargers and favorite headphones readily available when you start each day. Be sure to pay attention to announcements and emails from our IT department. They are working hard to make sure we all have the necessary access to work as efficiently as possible from our individual locations.

4 Create Dedicated Work Spaces and Set Boundaries

Suggest employees create dedicated spaces for each member of their household to work or conduct school work, if appropriate. Make sure each space is set up to maximize productivity and limit interruptions. Adults may need to establish dedicated rooms to manage the extra noise that will come with multiple conference calls happening throughout the day. This will require coordination, extra planning, and maybe even rearranging schedules to make sure everyone in the house can manage both work commitments and personal responsibilities.

Recommend employees establish a system that allows each person dedicated work time without interruption. They may need to get creative with signs or post-it notes that say things like, "I can't talk now," or "I am on an important phone call." Taking steps to keep their day to day as normal as possible will help tremendously. Flexible schedules may also be required if younger kids are at home and require additional support and supervision to stay on task.

5 Communicate More than Ever

Extra effort needs to be made in communicating to clients, colleagues, and family members. Take a few minutes at the beginning or end of the day to check in with your team. Author Brené Brown has a well-known quote, "clear is kind," that should be our guiding communication principle right now. It's important to connect weekly or even daily on projects, priorities, and client needs.

6 Ask for Help

The next few weeks may be challenging. Remind your employees it's okay to ask for help or admit they are struggling and that we are all in this together. If they need help designing a plan or managing remote work, suggest they reach out to a colleague with experience or ask their manager to provide some additional guidance.

7 Focus on Staying Well While at Home

- **Catch up on sleep:** Take advantage of the additional time at home and time savings from no commute to catch up on sleep. Sleep is critical to keeping you mentally and physically well.
- **Be mindful of what you are eating:** Find a balance by focusing on eating healthy, lean meats as well as fruits and vegetables. Eat sweets sparingly.
- **Get outside (if possible):** Unless you are ill, or have been asked to quarantine, getting a walk outside is a great way to get a change of scenery and is safe. If you cannot get outside, fresh air through an open window or balcony, sunlight, and even houseplants really do make a difference to energy and mood.

Using these tips and suggesting your employees create a plan may help them during these times.

Alliant is here to help you during this challenging time.