

## Working from Home

### Tips for your emotional health

These tips are designed to help you **maintain focus, routine and your emotional health**:

- **Maintain normal working hours** - discipline helps to keep us focused. This not only helps with your routine work output but also with that of your colleagues. They need to know you are there and available to talk to as you would normally be.
- **Allocate some “work” space** in your home - this may be a challenge but try to allocate a space in your house/flat to be your workspace that is different to where you will relax. It is important that your whole living space does not become your workspace as you need physical as well as mental separation between work time and home time.
- **Create a morning routine** – wake up and go to bed at healthy times to ensure you get enough sleep. What in your morning routine defines the start of work? It might be making a cup of coffee, it might be returning home after a jog, it might be getting dressed. Create a morning routine that ends with you starting work
- **Schedule breaks** at the same rate and time as you would at work. You are entitled to them. Use them wisely to maintain concentration. Set aside time to escape all forms of digital screens. Give your eyes, neck, shoulders, and back a much-needed rest.
- **Book in “coffee chats”** - Part of the value of a workplace is the social engagement that goes on. Losing that can damage your emotional health. In the workplace as you make coffee you are likely to have an informal catch up with colleagues. That is not an organic process when you work from home but you can plan in social chats. They will keep you more efficient.
- **Be in regular contact with your colleagues/line manager**– remember they may be in the same situation. Arrange regular team meetings via phone, Microsoft Teams or Google Hangouts. Use technology to replicate the work environment as much as possible.
- **Show up to meetings** – Instead of meetings at school, you may be required to attend virtual meetings. Schedule these in the same way you would normal face-to-face meetings; they are a great way to check in with everyone, measure your own progress and socialise a little. Raise any issues or risks, but also celebrate the small things. Don't skip them.
- **Maintain the same social media rules** at home as you do at work. There is no excuse for allowing unnecessary interruption into your schedule.
- **Agree boundaries** with your loved ones who may also be working from home. Agree when it is ok to chat and when it is not.
- **Look for training opportunities** - ensure you are up-to-date with all the online mandatory training and regularly check [www.romeromac.com/staff](http://www.romeromac.com/staff) for updates
- **Book regular check ins** – with your line manager by phone. It will help keep you focused and accountable and manage their control issues.
- **Create an end-of-day routine** - Like your morning routine that gets you ready for your day, set a routine that lets you (and your loved ones) know that you are winding down. It will allow you to “leave work” and engage with your after-hours activities mindfully and meaningfully and relax

Stay connected with current events but be careful where you get news and health information from, be careful where you source them and which ones you listen too. Equally, not all facts are relevant if taken out of context.

Allow yourself a small amount of time each day to develop your emotional strength and build the skills you may need to emotionally survive uncertain times. The time you save on your commute could help with this one.

### **It's ok to feel anxious, don't ignore your anxiety**

It's very normal to feel scared about something like this, acknowledge that you feel this way. Don't ignore these feelings. Make sure you are looking after yourself, doing what you can to help get a good night's sleep, eating well and doing exercise practising mindfulness or using breathing techniques to help you relax. These can be helpful in managing anxiety. They are good tools for dealing with nervous feelings.

Stay in contact with your social network. This can be as simple as phoning a friend for a chat, sending someone an email or joining in with a discussion via social media.

Exercising 20 to 30 minutes daily can significantly lower anxiety levels. You'll also boost endorphins and serotonin to flood your brain with happiness. Find time each day for exercise, meditation or other self-care practices, and make time for rest and relaxation. Disconnection from work is an important component to feeling refreshed and motivated.

Think about your diet. Your appetite might change if your routine changes, or if you're less active than you usually are. Eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar stable can help your mood and energy levels. If your blood sugar drops you might feel tired, irritable and depressed. Eating regularly and choosing foods that release energy slowly will help to keep your sugar levels steady.

Slow-release energy foods include: pasta, rice, oats, wholegrain bread and cereals, nuts and seeds.

Drink water regularly. Drinking enough water is important for your mental and physical health. Changing your routine might affect when you drink or what fluids you drink. It may help to set an alarm or use an app to remind you.

There is no doubt that the virus, the way it is spreading and the uncertainty it brings with it is adding to the stress levels that people are experiencing. Whether they are in isolation or not.

Here's some ideas to keep active and busy at home from [Anxiety UK](#)

- Download some podcasts you've been meaning to listen to
- Watch that boxset on Netflix if you have time on your hands
- Having boxes of things prepared that can be done alone, things like arts and crafts, knitting, video games
- Try some meditation, especially for those who've never tried it
- Baking
- Learning a new hobby, something like origami or other simple craft tasks
- Education (via online links)
- Skyping friends and Facetime calls
- Cooking
- Mindfulness
- Exercise bike
- Writing
- Reading
- Knitting and other crafts
- DIY
- Gardening