

Tips for Successful Telecommuting

If you have never worked as a telecommuter, the following are some tips to get you on your way to being successful. It is important to have a realistic view of telecommuting from the start. Your expectation should be one of getting your job done in a productive manner in the comfort of your home. Maintain the same expectations as if you were going into the work place.

Work Space:

- There should be a space in your home designated solely for your job. It should have adequate separation to maintain confidentiality. Having a designated work space helps your family identify when you are “at work.” When getting started, you may need to help those around you adjust to your home office as a place of work. Setting a physical environment for work helps an employee focus on work.
- Your environment should be comfortable, but it should not make you lazy. If something in your environment distracts you, remove it.

Plan Your Day:

- The transition from office to home can be a bigger adjustment than you anticipate. For your first week of telework, it is best to maintain the same hours and work flow you had at the office. After you have adjusted to working from home, you can gradually change up your schedule to be more flexible.

Home Distractions:

- Remind your loved ones the importance of your home office/work. Remind yourself you still need to put in the hours required when you are tempted to take care of personal needs. Make a list of personal items, or chores, you need to get done and coordinate them into your break(s). If you were using daycare previously, continue using daycare until you have established yourself as a productive teleworker.
- Do not take any personal calls you would not have taken while in the office and limit the number of e-mail checks each day.

Breaks:

- You can burn out if you do not take breaks, whether working in the office or at home. When you take a break at the office, it is time for you to refocus and recharge. When you take a break at home, you will most likely do house chores or run errands.
- Working from home can be challenging as you go from one type of work to another... give yourself a real break.

Personal Life:

- Just as you do not want personal distractions interrupting your work, don't let work interrupt your personal life. Having an office at home may have you wandering back to work to do "just one more thing." If you keep to your work plan you should not be concerned about unfinished business.

Technology:

- Proper technology and adequate home internet connections are key to being successful. Before you begin, do a trial run with whatever computer equipment you will use to ensure you will have adequate connectivity.
- Know your IT resources and contacts for trouble shooting when needed.

Overall, give yourself time to adjust. Remember to do a trial run before committing to telecommuting. When you first get started, dress and plan your day as if you are going to the office. Once you have adjusted, the myths of telecommuting will have dissipated and you will have greater insight and confidence to adjust to a more flexible work-life balance.

Enjoy!