

# Remote Work Tips

Working from home can also be known as “remote work,” “telework” and “telecommuting.” Employees who telework often find that working remotely is different than they expected and that it requires specific skills and habits. The following tips will help you adapt and work efficiently while at home.

- 1. Keep your routine.** Going to bed and waking at the same time can help you stay in a working frame of mind.
- 2. Define your workspace.**

Experienced teleworkers have shared that it can be difficult to stay focused at home. We are creatures of habit and most of us are used to our routines at home. Establishing a workspace, even if it is your kitchen table, cues your brain that it is time for work. Wearing attire that you may wear to the office even if it is your “casual Friday” attire is another cue.
- 3. Master the basics.**
  - Set up call forwarding and how to access your voicemail from home.
  - Know how to remote into the UC network and other online tools you use regularly.
  - Stay connected to colleagues with programs like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, WebEx, or another instant messaging client.
  - Plan for video calls/meetings by making sure you know how to turn on/off your computer’s camera and microphone and being aware that your colleagues may be able to see the background behind you. Be sure to dress appropriately if using video.
  - Find more online meeting tips below and visit IT@UC’s [Working Remotely page](#) on Bearcats Landing for additional tools.
- 4. Set daily goals, track them and share your progress.**

You may be surprised by how differently the workday passes without the comings and goings of an office to break things up or influence what you do next. Start each day by writing down what you need to achieve and then track your progress. Pay attention to how long tasks take you and start adjusting your daily goals to match your current rhythm. Communicate with your supervisor and/or colleagues if you think your telework plan needs to be adjusted.
- 5. Eliminate distractions.**

Home can mean loved ones, pets or a favorite hobby are only a few feet away. Depending on your arrangements, you may need to hang a “do not disturb” sign, close the door to the room you are in, or use headphones to block noise to minimize interruptions.
- 6. Prioritize privacy.**

Whether you are in your home or a common area, take five minutes to assess the privacy of your workspace. Can someone standing behind you read your computer screen? Are your windows open so your neighbor can hear your phone call? What information do you need to secure before grabbing a cup of coffee or heading to the restroom? Your personal privacy matters too - adjust if there is anything around you that you would not want visible during a video call.

## 7. Continue to employ security best practices.

Situations like this are prime phishing opportunities. Remain vigilant for security concerns and be sure to report suspicious emails to the Information Security team at [abuse@uc.edu](mailto:abuse@uc.edu).

- It should be noted that caution needs to be taken when dealing with personal health information (“PHI”) and HIPAA matters while working from home or another off-site location. If you have questions, contact UC’s [Privacy Officer](#).
- VPNs can also allow you to safely connect to a remote network of computers as if you are there. If you are dealing with sensitive information and want to explore VPN, you can learn more at IT@UC’s [Working Remotely page](#) on Bearcats Landing.
- If you have a security incident, reach out to the Information Security team at [abuse@uc.edu](mailto:abuse@uc.edu).

## 8. Avoid handling personal tasks during your business hours.

While it’s tempting to incorporate a little housekeeping or running errands into your day, it may be more difficult to regain focus.

## 9. Practice self-care.

- *Take time to transition.* Working from home is a new experience for many of us. You might feel isolated, lonely, stressed or unmotivated. OR, you might feel relaxed, energized or productive. It’s all ok and normal. Transitions take time, so go easy on yourself. Reach out to others, including [Impact Solutions](#), UC’s employee assistance plan, as needed.
- *Take scheduled breaks.* Set an alarm to get up and stretch every hour. Walk around your house while talking on the phone. Move to a separate area for lunch.
- *Pay attention to ergonomics.* Use the most comfortable chair you can with back support. Maintain good posture by rolling your shoulders back. Tune into long phone calls with earbuds or headphones. For every 20 minutes of screen time, change your glance to 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Place your device on stacked books or boxes for a short period of time – eye level is ideal.
- *Take time to check in with co-workers.* While working from home you won’t have the same opportunity for face to face interactions, but it is important to maintain. Make time to connect with co-workers during the day.

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## How Managers Can Support Remote Workers

1. Be available to your team.
  - Be accessible to your team throughout the day for questions and concerns.
  - Establish your preferred means of communications – whether it is text, phone or email.
2. Establish structured daily check-ins.
  - Plan a daily check in via phone or Teams on a one on one basis with employees and/or a daily team check in. Calls/check-ins should be regular and predictable and provide an opportunity to catch up on projects, challenges, and share information and ideas.
3. Offer encouragement and support.
  - Especially in the context of an abrupt shift to remote work, it important for managers to acknowledge stress, listen to employees' concerns, and empathize with their challenges. Managers should remind employees of the availability of [Impact Solutions](#), UC's employee assistance plan.
4. Assist your team in obtaining all necessary tools in order to work remotely effectively and efficiently.

## Online Meeting Tips

With more virtual and telephonic meetings, keep these tips in mind to ensure you're practicing telework etiquette:

- Introduce everyone at the start of the meeting.
- Give everyone a chance to contribute.
- Minimize distractions and stay engaged while other people are presenting.
- Be careful to not interrupt other people when they're speaking or attempt to speak over them.
- Mute yourself in between times of sharing to limit background noise.
- Test all technology (including camera/video, Wi-Fi and screen sharing) before the meeting.
- Send an agenda in advance of the meeting and ask attendees to come prepared.
- Don't work on other tasks - like checking email - during the virtual meeting.
- Turn off or silence all notifications, like cell phones.
- Make sure all team members are in a quiet area free from unnecessary distractions.

## Additional Resources

- [Impact Solutions](#), UC's employee assistance plan – 24/7 telephonic and online counseling and support, Emotional Well-being Coach/Chatbot, Mindfulness Coaching, on-demand tools
- IT@UC's [Working Remotely page](#) on Bearcats Landing
- UC's [Alternative Work Schedule Policy](#)
- [A Guide to Managing Your \(Newly\) Remote Workers](#) by Harvard Business Review
- [Building and Leading High-Performing Remote Teams](#) by SHRM
- [New to Working Remotely? These Resources Can Help](#) by LinkedIn
- [8 Tips To Make Working From Home Work For You](#) by NPR
- [15 Questions About Remote Work, Answered](#) by Harvard Business Review