Tips for staying healthy and productive when working from home:

Set up a separate office space.

Use a space in your home that's designated solely for work. Working in bed can interfere with your ability to relax later on. And working from your couch can create mental associations that keep your mind occupied with professional obligations, even during off-hours. Set up an ergonomically appropriate desk and chair and separate the professional from the personal. Complete the self-assessment checklist for your workspace and discuss it with your supervisor to ensure you have a healthy and safe place to complete your work.

Create a relaxed environment.

Staying home means you have free rein over your surroundings, so create a relaxed workspace to help you keep your stress level under control. If a beautiful view helps you stay calm, set up your desk in front of a window or within eyesight of artwork you enjoy.

Communicate expectations with anyone who will be home with you.

Of course, you might be working from home but still have "company." Make sure any roommates, siblings, parents, spouses, and animals (well, maybe not animals) respect your space during work hours. Just because you're working from home doesn't mean you're available.

Pretend like you *are* going into the office.

When working remotely, do all the things you'd do to prepare for a day in the office: Set your alarm, make (or go get) coffee, and wear office attire.

Plan out what you'll be working on ahead of time.

Spending time figuring out what you'll do today can take away from actually doing those things. And, you'll have planned your task list so recently that you can be tempted to change your schedule on the fly. It's important to let your agenda change if you need it to, but it's equally as important to commit to an agenda that outlines every assignment before you begin. Try solidifying your schedule the day before, making it feel more official when you wake up the next day to get started on it.

Set a schedule and stick to it.

It can be tempting to wake up late and work at odd hours, but you will benefit your mental health and the quality of your work by setting a schedule as if you were going into the office. Discuss your schedule with your supervisor so everyone is on the same page.

Get up every hour and get out at least once a day.

It can be easy to get stuck in your seat, especially since you feel comfortable in your space. Set a timer or use an app to remind you to get up and stretch once every hour, and make sure to get outside, even just to walk around the block and get some sunshine and fresh air.

Maintain a healthy work-life balance by logging your time and setting limits.

Track your hours and keep yourself accountable. Don't let work bleed over into your personal time, or vice versa and keep an eye on how much time you're spending on work every day.

Use technology to stay connected.

Working from home might help you focus on your work in the short term, but it can also make you feel cut off from colleagues to other locations. Using Microsoft Teams to chat or videoconferencing tools can make it easy to check in with coworkers and remind you how your work is contributing to the big picture. Learn more about McMaster's tools for working remotely.

Keep the kitchen stocked with healthy snacks and meals.

It can be easy to wander into the kitchen when you know it's packed with treats, so keep temptation at bay by buying fresh fruits and vegetables and keeping the candy and junk food out of sight. Don't forget to keep yourself hydrated to be at your best mentally and physically.

Pick a definitive finishing time each day.

You might be under the impression that working from home establishes more work-life balance but be careful with that assumption. When working from home, sometimes you can get so caught up in your activity, in a relaxing environment, that you lose complete track of time.

In lieu of coworkers, whose packing up and leaving the office reminds you to do the same, set an alarm at the end of the day to indicate your normal workday is coming to an end. You don't have to stop at exactly that time, but knowing the workday is technically over can help you start the process of saving your work and calling it quits for the evening.

Further information about creating a healthy and productive remote work environment.

Use your MacID to access LinkedIN learning courses, including a course by bestselling author and productivity expert, Dave Crenshaw as he offers best practices for anyone who works from home. In this course, Dave shows participants how to set up a dedicated workspace for maximum productivity, how to craft your daily schedule for peak productivity and plan meaningful breaks to avoid burnout, how to collaborate with remote coworkers, including how to use virtual meetings productively, and he offers advice for working parents and other caregivers who might be balancing professional and personal responsibilities in the home.

McMaster
University