

Are you getting the best out of Working From Home?

Derek Mowbray, March 2021.

Many organisations are now working towards applying a hybrid approach to the workplace, extending the places to work to include your home, as well as periodic visits to an office (when conditions allow).

As this will be the new reality for a sizeable proportion of the working population, it is the new frontier – new experiences, new challenges, new ways of working.

The following check list is designed to help you cope better with the changing regime.

The evening before the dawn¹



Reflect on what went well during the day just passed.	
What were the failures waiting to be successes that happened in the day just passed?	
What are you doing tomorrow? Make work and domestic lists.	
Work out your 168 for the week (the number of hours in the week), and check how much time you have tomorrow to do the tasks you want to complete.	
Work out how much productive time you expect to work tomorrow.	
Anticipate what hurdles you may face tomorrow and work out now what to do about it or them.	
What are the mutual expectations between you, your supervisor, and your team for the work to be completed this week/month? How far have you got with the plan?	
What are the uncontrollable tasks tomorrow? How can you bring these into your control?	
Which item is both important and urgent? If none of them, then tomorrow do the important only items first. Then the urgent but not important. Ditch the ones that are neither important nor urgent!	
Switch off the TV, mobile, cd player an hour before going to sleep.	
Stop drinking alcohol an hour before going to sleep. Start drinking water to keep hydrated.	
Go for a brief walk	
Relax by talking in whispers, playing, having a hot bath or shower and, maybe, afterwards read a magazine. Reading exciting books is tempting, but if it is too exciting it might keep you awake!	
Prepare for sleep. Make the bedroom dark and cosy, with good ventilation.	
Set the alarm clock.	

¹ The timings for those who work in shifts or overnight for any reason will be, obviously, different.

Give thanks to yourself, and others who have been involved, for the day just passed.	
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The dawn

Calmly wake up earlier than your old norm, wash and get dressed. This is the time when your body comes under considerable stress at discovering you are still alive and have to get out of bed!											
First thing, tell yourself how fantastic a human being you are.											
Take some exercise.											
Think about what sort of form are you in today?											
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>10 Lifetime peak form</td> <td>9 Excellent form</td> <td>8 Very good form</td> <td>7 Good form</td> <td>6 Average form</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 Low form</td> <td>4 Very low form</td> <td>3 Extremely low form</td> <td>2 I am struggling and need help</td> <td>1 Crisis, seek help now</td> </tr> </table>	10 Lifetime peak form	9 Excellent form	8 Very good form	7 Good form	6 Average form	5 Low form	4 Very low form	3 Extremely low form	2 I am struggling and need help	1 Crisis, seek help now	
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Set yourself up for the day with some energy creating food; fruit juice but limited amount of coffee.											
Find a quiet part of the house/flat/room.											
Find a table and a comfortable chair, one that supports your back and is straight. Try not to sit on your bed with your laptop.											
Consider using a stand up table during the day.											
Make sure your computer/laptop/tablet screen is aligned with your eye levels.											
Make sure the lighting is bright, the windows are open.											
Use the time you used to commute to pretend you are commuting at home. Do whatever you did whilst you commuted.											
Try not to drink too much coffee. Drink water instead.											
Arrange the structure of the day with anyone in your home. Work out when interruptions can happen; when breaks and a break for lunch might take place, and when you want to finish for the day.											

The day

Check out your messages	
Look at your 'to do list' from last evening.	
Structure your activities in 50 minute chunks of time with a ten minute break before starting your next 50 minutes.	
Switch off your mobile during the 50 minutes concentrated working time.	

Do the first item on your list.	
Have a reward.	
Do the second item; have a break; then the third, and so on.	
Schedule when you can make contact with your colleagues and your supervisor.	
Arrange with your colleagues when you can be interrupted.	
During your breaks take some exercise.	
During the break, write up your daily diary.	
Find time to connect with your colleagues and supervisor.	
Express gratitude to someone during the day.	
Establish a virtual lunch group with whom you can share the lunchtime period.	
Tick off items of your to do list once they've been completed or taken off for other reasons.	
At lunchtime work out how many tasks you can realistically complete during the afternoon.	

The late afternoon

Get in touch with your colleagues to tell them you're signing off soon, and not to disturb you again, until tomorrow.	
Write in your diary what you have achieved today.	
Tidy up your work space so you leave it as you want to find it tomorrow.	
Take some exercise.	
Use your commuting time to do what you did when you were actually commuting.	
Say hello to others in your house, as a sign you've 'come in' from work.	
Remember to prepare for tomorrow.	
Now relax and enjoy your evening!	



Derek Mowbray

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Derek Mowbray is a Chartered Psychologist and Chartered Scientist with a doctorate in the psychology of leadership. With CEO experience in public, private and voluntary sectors, Derek has held various top leadership positions prior to turning his attention to helping organisations understand the link between psychological wellbeing and performance.

Derek specialises in the primary prevention of stress at work (a major inhibitor to performance) by focusing on elevating psychological wellbeing in the workforce. He facilitates the application of The WellBeing and Performance Agenda, a framework that transforms organisations by focusing on behaviours and actions of leaders so they provoke the workforce to thrive and perform at its peak.

With a special interest in organisation health psychology, which aims to harmonise the relationship between organisations and their workforce, Derek's specialties are building organisation-wide positive work cultures, the performance related behaviour of leaders and managers in relation to their employees and strengthening mental resilience.

He is the originator of **Psychological Responsibility**, which places on the individual a responsibility for feeling psychologically well, as well as a responsibility to do no psychological harm to others. He is, also, a sponsor of the method of '**sharing responsibility for the future success of the organisation**' as a principle underpinning organisational success and high achievement. His work approaches and interventions are well recognised and adopted throughout the UK and internationally.

Derek's mission is to create and sustain 'the workplace as a fabulous, high performing place to work'.