

WORKING FROM HOME: HOW TO PROTECT YOUR MENTAL WELL-BEING AND HAVE A PRODUCTIVE DAY

Coronavirus has plunged the world into uncertainty and Exclusive Networks into a new way of working. Working from home can take its toll on people's mental health, particularly those already living with conditions like anxiety and OCD. So how can we protect our mental health?



START YOUR DAY AS NORMAL

Get Up, Get Dressed, Have Breakfast and guess what you're ready for your day, PLUS you're already at work! No annoying commute. Getting ready for your day as you normally would gets you into the right headspace for working and helps minimise those embarrassing conference calls in your pyjamas!



STICK TO YOUR TO DO LIST

Make a to do list and put your least favourite activity at the top. Starting your day off with the worst job, means that your day can only get better!



HAVE BREAKS FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

Remove notifications on social media apps, such as twitter or facebook that could be distracting or triggering for you.



STAY CONNECTED WITH PEOPLE

Feeling connected releases positive emotions, so prioritise yourself and set aside 'check-in times' with colleagues, friends or family on facetime, teams or zoom.



DON'T WORK IN SILENCE

As much as we love our colleagues they are not always the quietest bunch, so it can be a little jarring to go from a noisy office, to a silent home office. Don't be afraid to listen to music, or put the TV on quietly in the background. Having some 'white noise' elsewhere can actually help concentration, plus the normality of everyday radio can help alleviate stress and anxiety.



DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR HOUSE MATES!

Whether it is children, flat mates, family or pets, it is to be expected that there are others in your house during this time. Don't worry if they pop up on your conference calls or can be heard in the background. We are all in the same boat and everyone understands these unusual circumstances.

AVOID BURNOUT

With weeks and months of the coronavirus pandemic ahead, it is important to have down time. Specialists recommend continuing to access nature and sunlight wherever possible. Do exercise, eat well and stay hydrated.



You can practice the "Apple" technique to deal with anxiety and worries.

- **Acknowledge:** Notice and acknowledge the uncertainty as it comes to mind.
- **Pause:** Don't react as you normally do. Don't react at all. Pause and breathe.
- **Pull back:** Tell yourself this is just the worry talking, and this apparent need for certainty is not helpful and not necessary. It is only a thought or feeling. Don't believe everything you think. Thoughts are not statements or facts.
- **Let go:** Let go of the thought or feeling. It will pass. You don't have to respond to them. You might imagine them floating away in a bubble or cloud.
- **Explore:** Explore the present moment, because right now, in this moment, all is well. Notice your breathing and the sensations of your breathing. Notice the ground beneath you. Look around and notice what you see, what you hear, what you can touch, what you can smell. Right now. Then shift your focus of attention to something else – on what you need to do, on what you were doing before you noticed the worry, or do something else – mindfully with your full attention.

WASH YOUR HANDS – BUT NOT EXCESSIVELY



- For people with OCD and some types of anxiety, being constantly told to wash your hands can be especially difficult to hear.
- Charity OCD Action says the issue to look out for is the function – for example, is the washing being carried out for the recommended amount of time to reduce the risk of spreading of the virus – or is it being done ritualistically in a specific order to feel "just right"?