

8 Ways

To Make Working From Home As Great As It Sounds





23% OF U.S. EMPLOYEES

did some or all their work from home in 2014 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.



67% OF U.S. EMPLOYERS

allow some employees to work from home during regular paid hours, according to the 2014 National Study of Employers.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Source: 2014 National Study of Employers

LIVE THE DREAM

HOME – YOUR CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

More people are working from home. It's good for the environment and some experts estimate that the average telecommuter saves between \$2,000 and \$7,000 a year on commuting expenses, while employers save an average of \$11,000 per year when employees work from home.*

So if you're part of the *79% of Americans who say they'd like to work from home at least part of the time, then make sure you do your "homework," and master our 8 tips of the highly successful housebound worker.



Source: Global Workplace Analytics

TIP 1: CONSIDER SPACE

THE JOB'S THE SAME. THE ENVIRONMENT HAS CHANGED.

Your personal workspace matters. It shapes your productivity, creativity, and your overall work experience.

Your workspace should be designed to perform. What that looks like, exactly, depends on what you want to get done. You may not need a desk or a file cabinet, but what you do need is a specific space where work happens, so others inhabiting your home can see when you are in the zone, and know not to bug you.

Your workspace can be a bean bag and a laptop, a TV table and a corner on the couch, or you may even have the luxury of a home office with a door that closes — what matters the most is that there is a space where you work that is distinct from other spaces in your home.

60 percent of organizations offer some form of telecommuting, including:

56%

AD-HOC

36%

PART-TIME

22%

FULL-TIME

Source: 2015 Employee Benefits by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

TIP 2: GET A GOAL

MAKE A LIST. CHECK IT TWICE.

Goal setting can be intimidating if you don't do it on a regular basis. For those who haven't mastered the art, there's a tendency to get lofty, and while loftiness is great for aspirations, it stinks for goal-setting. Why? Goals need to be specific and measurable.

Before you begin your work for each day, jot a simple list on a Post-it® about what you expect to get accomplished that day. Then, post it where you can see it. Goals act as a compass, giving us direction and helping us stay the course — come what may. Plus, let's be honest, few things are as gratifying in the work world as crossing something off our to-do list.



Why do 3% of Harvard MBAs make ten times as much as the other 97% combined?

They had clear, written goals and plans to accomplish them.

Source: What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School: Notes from a Street-smart Executive

TIP 3: KNOCK IT OFF

DISCERNING DISTRACTIONS

It's a fact, there will be distractions. Know what else is a fact? Only 2% of people can multitask effectively. If you fall into the unfortunate category of the 98% for whom multi-tasking = epic fail, then you must become good at choosing which distractions are worth engaging and which are best ignored.

For example, if you are working on the last paragraph of a report and the dog is whining because she needs to take care of some business of her own; get up and let her out. You may attempt to ignore her pleas, but it will likely take you significantly longer to finish, and it won't be your best work.

However, if you are on a video conference call, this is not a good time to check your e-mail, steal a quick look at the headlines, or quietly play solitaire. Demonstrating to clients and co-workers that you can work from home without being distracted is always a smart move.



Focusing on more than one thing **decreases your productivity by 40%** and lowers your IQ by 10 points, according to [Harvard Business Review](#).

Source: Psychology Today

TIP 4: STAY ON TRACK

IT'S ABOUT TIME

One of the best ways to ensure you make the most of your time working from home is to keep track of it. Whether you use time-tracking software supplied by your employer, or you log it yourself via a journal or spreadsheet, maintaining a record of when you begin and end work enables you to set more realistic goals and maintain a good work/life balance.

Time-tracking may also prove helpful should a client ever request a record of hours on a project. You'll also be glad you have it the next time you want to show your employer why you're the ideal candidate for a raise or promotion.

There are numerous apps and websites to track your time, including "Hours", which provides a timer for all your tasks: [7 Apps and Sites to Track Your Time in 2015](#).



Source: Field Guide

TIP 5: TAKE FIVE

GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK

Sometimes the best way to tackle a problem when working from home is to get up and walk away. There's something to be said for taking a break and getting a fresh perspective, and the best way to do that is to change your scenery.

Go exploring. See something new. Interact with others — besides the dog. Even if you only make a quick trip to a coffee shop or take a stroll around the block, you'll feel better if you take a couple of breaks throughout the day. Best of all, when you return to your work space, you'll work better, too.

University of Illinois psychology professor Alejandro Lleras explains:

“...Deactivating and reactivating your goals allows you to stay focused. Brief mental breaks will actually help you stay focused on your task!”

30 MIN = **INCREASED** = **LESS** = **MORE**
BRISK WALK HAPPINESS STRESS CONFIDENCE

A brisk 30-minute walk stimulates brain chemicals that help you feel happier, less stressed and more confident.

Source: Fast Company
Source: Mayo Clinic

TIP 6: BE AVAILABLE

ANSWER THE CALL

There are compromises that must be made when you work from home. In exchange for the comfort and convenience of working in sweatpants, there is an unspoken expectation that you will be available whenever you are needed.

Does that mean you have to answer your boss' 2 a.m. email within 15 minutes? Not necessarily, but it does mean that if a client calls and you are eating lunch or taking a break, you need to drop what you are doing and be present for them.

Sure, a lot of life coaches will tell you to set firm boundaries with bosses and clients regarding your personal time, but for the home worker this can be a career limiting move. Put their needs before yours and you will always have plenty of work. After all, everyone knows that corner office overlooking the backyard comes with a hefty price-tag, but boy is it worth it.



“80 percent of success is showing up.”

– Woody Allen

TIP 7: WATCH IT

MANAGING YOUR BOTTOM LINE

There are two types of people who work from home: those who forget to eat and those who graze all day. If you're the former, set an alarm so that you keep your brain fueled and your energy levels up. If you're the latter, you may need to employ some smart strategies to ensure your increased productivity at home doesn't subsequently lead to an increased pant size.

Some ways to avoid overeating while working from home include: keeping only healthy snacks in the pantry; not eating in your workspace; and abiding by the same lunch and snack schedule you had at the office.

“Scientists using a new way to look at data concluded that the main reason that obesity has risen sharply in the United States in recent decades is predominantly because of over-eating rather than lack of physical activity.”

Source: Medical News Today

TIP 8: POP IN

MAKE TIME FOR FACE TIME

We've all had that left-out feeling when someone shares a "hilarious" story, but try as you might, you just don't get what's funny. It always ends with the same line, "I guess you just had to be there."

To ensure you don't experience that outsider feeling with bosses, clients and coworkers, leave the house from time to time and visit people in person. Even if work is on the other coast, you still want to make "special guest" appearances with some regularity to ensure you remain a visible and valued member of the team. A few of the times you will want to make sure you show up are when:

- New leaders come on board/new people have been added to your team
- Complicated information needs to be shared/explained/understood
- Major office celebrations, sales conventions and team-building activities are being conducted
- There are opportunities to interact with customers



HOME STRETCH

SHORETEL IS HERE TO CHEER YOU ON

We hope our 8 Tips for Highly Successful Home Workers has helped you discover a better way to work from home. To learn more how ShoreTel empowers the anywhere, anytime workforce, visit: www.shoretel.com.

