

6 Things for a successful home-working setup

Barbara Larson is an Executive Professor of Management at Northeastern's D'Amore-Mckim School of Business and has conducted extensive research into remote work and collaboration. These are her insights into how to work effectively from home.

1. Create a dedicated workspace

Establish a designated work area. This might not be a separate room, but define your workspace and make it as free of distraction as possible, away from noise and clutter. Try and find somewhere with natural lighting, good ventilation and an ergonomic work surface.

2. Get the right technology

Set up your virtual workspace. Whether it's upgrading your internet provider, making sure you have unified communications software or getting professional audio and

video technology that works with Teams, Zoom or other platforms, a technology ecosystem that works will be key to enabling your fluid communication and collaboration.

3. Establish a routine

Create habits that establish your workday. It's easy to start working in your pyjamas without eating breakfast, and easily blur the boundaries between your home and work lives. Putting habits into place such as showering and putting clothes on will mentally gear you towards your workday and establishes divides and healthy routines.

4. Increase your communications cycles

Keep on communicating. Without a physical presence, and with changing daily habits and routines, it becomes more important to find new ways to communicate with your colleagues. You can set a status or let team members know via Slack, Teams or email when they can or can't reach you.

5. Look after your health

It often feels like it's never the right time to take a break and even though remote work can help with your work life balance, it can also make it hard to disconnect. But as research has shown, meeting fatigue can set in after as little as 30-40 minutes of high concentration. Maintain structure in your days and make sure to build in short breaks every few hours.

6. Set guidelines with your family and your work

Establish clear boundaries with work to make sure that you are not "always on" and have a clear workday, and switch between work and home lives. Communicate your boundaries to family members as well as colleagues to minimize stress.

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