

Flexing or Fatiguing?

Dressing casually every day, longer lie ins and shorter commutes, being in for parcels and saving money are all benefits of home working. However maintaining a healthy work/life balance can be difficult when the line between the personal and professional has become more blurred than ever.

Follow the Eight Rs to Take Back Some Control



ROUTINE

Create a routine and stick to it. Work out the times you can and are willing to flex into. Be clear about the outside work commitments you want or need to preserve (e.g. school runs, exercise classes) and put them in your diary.



RITUALS

Think about habits to get into to start and end the day a bit like the commute. It could be a quiet cup of coffee in the morning or a walk outside at the end of the day to clear your head. These will help you to mark the transition and boundaries between work and personal time.



REGULAR BREAKS

You would never sit at the desk all day. Schedule breaks. Be it a stretch, a coffee catch up with a colleague, a chance to put the washing on or walk the dog. Take a proper lunch break.



REVIEW

Keep a log of your hours – you may find you are doing way more (or less) than you think you are. Those 15 minute quick email checks all add up.

Keep asking yourself if the work pattern you have created works for you. If it doesn't think what you need to change.

The temptation is to schedule back to back meetings. Make sure you also schedule time to do the tasks. Try turning off the phone and notifications in this period to allow you to concentrate fully.



REACH OUT

It can be easy to feel the pressure to reply to emails sent by colleagues out of traditional work hours. Think about adjusting your email sign off to explain – you are working flexibly to manage your work life balance but you do not expect a reply at this time. Share your work pattern openly so others do not assume you are working long hours and feel the pressure to follow.

If you are feeling isolated, you are not alone. Reach out to other home workers and build in a chance to chat.



REFLECT

It's easy when working alone to stop feeling a sense of achievement. Take time at the end of the day or week to write down or reflect on what you have achieved. You may want to schedule an end of day check in with a colleague to share what you have done.



RE-SCHEDULE

Take time at the end of each day to re-plan what you need to do. This will allow you to switch off, knowing you are clear what you need to tackle the following day.



REST UP

Literally switch off and pack up. Put the computer and phone away and out of sight. If you have work apps on your personal phone turn off the notifications. Escape the pinging. Plan an end time and stick to it. Set an alarm 15 mins before the end time to remind you to finish up.