The Coronavirus outbreak and subsequent government advice means that many people will be working from home for the first time. Here's how to get it right, be productive and reduce stress within your workforce.

1. **DO MAINTAIN REGULAR CONTACT WITH YOUR TEAM**

Just because you’re working away from your physical workplace doesn’t mean you’ll be working ‘on your own’ or without access to vital files and systems – modern digital tools should mean that working remotely is almost the same as working in your office. While you won’t be able to enjoy a quick chat at the kettle with colleagues and friends, tools such as Microsoft Teams and Workplace by Facebook will help you keep in touch with peers and staff.

1. **DON’T SNACK ALL DAY**

Just because you’re away from the office you don’t need to snack all day. One of the downsides of working anywhere is that we usually find ourselves at home with our fridge and food cupboards within easy reach.

One way of eliminating temptation is to buy only healthy food – after all, if it’s not in the house, you can’t eat it.

1. **DO DRESS APPROPRIATELY**

Spending the day in your dressing gown won’t help your productivity or state of mind. While dressing up in your usual office gear probably isn’t necessary (especially if you usually opt for a suit), do make the effort to shower, brush your hair, and put on something presentable. More and more of the tools that remote workforces use to stay connected include video conference facilities – and you wouldn’t want to be caught on camera in your pyjamas.

1. **DON’T TURN THE TV ON**

While you might find ambient noise – the sort that replicates the gentle chatter of the workplace – soothing and helps you to focus, popping your favourite Netflix series on your TV is likely to prove a distraction and a significant hindrance to getting stuff done. Instead, opt for the radio – whether something classical like Radio 3, or more commercial such as your local station – or take your pick from the endless stream of ‘music to work to’ playlists you’ll find on sites such as Soundcloud, Spotify, Apple Music and YouTube.

1. **DON’T JUST WORK FROM ANYWHERE**

While a change of scenery can help to boost your creativity, having a routine and a dedicated workspace is really important.

No working from your couch or bed – no matter how tempting it might be. Doing so will cause back problems, make it really tempting to go back to sleep or slack off, and it’s not an appropriate background for a video call.

1. **DO DECORATE YOUR WORKSPACE**

If you’re set to spend a lot of time working from home, try to make your workspace as enjoyable a place to be as possible. That means getting all the things you need – whether that’s pens and pencils, notebooks and tissues, for example – as well as items to spruce up the place. Try adding pictures or photos of family and friends, a notice board, and even a houseplant or two. You’ll probably also want to get a desk lamp so you don’t strain your eyes on gloomy days.

1. **DON’T FORGET TO TAKE REGULAR BREAKS**

Taking a break is just as important when working remotely as it is in the office. Stepping away from your screen for even a short while can protect you from headaches, eyestrain and a bad back. Have a more productive and useful break by opting for a healthy snack, or to squeeze in some exercise – preferably outdoors if you can. For an extra creative boost, try 10 minutes of mindfulness or meditation.

1. **DO GET THINGS ORGANISED**

Save yourself time and frustration by organising your home office (or work bag) to ensure that you have everything you need and know where it is. Make a list of the items you use frequently and ensure you have them with you if you’re working away from your regular workplace or your home office.

1. **DON’T LIMIT YOURSELF TO THE 9 TO 5**

Work when you’re most productive. Some of us are early risers and others hate getting up at the crack of dawn.

If you’re working from home (and as long as you’ve informed your colleagues), working between the hours that align with your internal clock and natural rhythms enables you to make the most of the period of time when you feel most motivated and productive.

*The above is not an exhaustive list and should be used as an advisory document that provides some insight and advice in creating a positive workforce in these challenging times.*