

Transitioning to Remote Work

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Target Audience

Target learners are people who have been required to move from an in person, on-site, work environment, to a home-based, remote work environment.

Learning Objective:

By the end of this course, learners will be able to apply the tips and best practices, identified within, to create a healthy and productive remote work environment that will improve or maintain current levels of employee productivity and job-satisfaction surveys.

Assessments:

Mixed multiple-choice, free-response, and T/F questions.

Instructional Strategies:

Job Satisfaction Surveys, Productivity Reports

Course Outline

1. Introduction

2. Creating a Healthy & Productive Environment

A. **LESSON 1:** Your Workspace

1. **Heading:** Creating a successful workspace starts with creating a separate workspace.
 - Separating your "work-life" from your "home-life" can be a challenge. The lines that normally separate the two become blurred and can easily disappear if we don't take deliberate steps to maintain them.
 - Whether its a spare room, the garage, or just a quiet corner in your home, creating a healthy and productive workspace means you're going to need a separate area to work from. You'll find that it's easier to stay focused on your work, easier to stay organized and allows you to end the workday more easily when you can exit the work-space.
 - Having a separate space to call your "office" will also help to set boundaries for family members and others in your home. Seeing you in your designated workspace, the people you share your home with will have a visual cue that you're focusing on work and shouldn't be interrupted for non-emergency things.
2. **Heading:** Personalize your workspace
Subheading: It's YOUR Workspace - Make it YOURS
 - You're going to spend a lot of time in your workspace, so make it cozy and make it something that supports both your creativity and your productivity.
 - If music increases your productivity and happiness during the workday, add it to your new space!
 - Does seeing pictures of your family or friends inspire you? Surround yourself with them!

- Do you like to use a whiteboard for brainstorming? Hang one up!
- The ways you can customize and create your workspace are nearly limitless. The goal is to create a space that is uniquely yours and to surround yourself with the things that positively impact your senses, your emotions and state of mind.

Activity 1: Home Office Click and Reveal

3. **Heading:** Check your tech

Subheading: Your Talent + Your Tools = Your Success

- We've all heard the old saying, "You need to use the right tool for the right job". That's never been more true than when transitioning from office to remote work. Modern technology has made that transition possible, but if that technology isn't present in your new workspace, you'll watch as your productivity suffers and your stress level rises.
- Any remote worker will tell you that access to consistent WiFi is integral to their success, but there's more to a successful setup than an internet connection. Along with having the ability to take video calls without losing connection, you should consider what tools and tech you'll need to do your job well. For example, many remote workers invest in a great pair of noise-cancelling headphones so that they can take their work anywhere - regardless of background noise levels. Others find that wireless keyboards and mouse's, or even a second screen, are integral to their efficiency.
- Your Home Network
 - a. Nothing is more important to your workspace tech than your network - more specifically, your connection to the internet.
 - b. With that in mind, you'll want to invest in the highest speed internet connection available to you. Doing this will avoid problems like choppy or dropped video conferences, slow file transfers and many other issues.
- Your Computer
 - a. Ideally, you should have a separate computer for work use and one for personal use.
 - b. If that's not an option, you'll want to communicate with your supervisor or IT department as to security procedures, hardware requirements and networking concerns when using your own, personal device.
- Your apps
 - a. Communication and collaboration are essential when working remotely. Luckily there are hundreds of applications to help you collaborate and keep in touch with team members and customers, manage projects and stay productive.
 - b. If you haven't used software, like Zoom for video conferences, a real-time messaging app, like Slack or a shared document platform, like Google Drive, you're in for a treat!

B. **LESSON 2:** “Office Hours”

- Because you're at home, it is easy to go back to the "office" after dinner and work to finish this or that. To maintain a healthy work/life balance, you're going to have to fight this urge.
- Knowing when to log in /log off can be one of the most challenging aspects of remote work. Though you may receive emails and chat notifications at any hour (especially if you're working in a different time zone than your coworkers), it's important to develop a habit of setting a time when you officially start each day and when you log off for the night. The best part of working remotely is having the flexibility to work when you are most productive, so be careful about setting the standard that you are available 24/7.

Activity 2: Slide Show Interaction

i. Establish and Maintain a Consistent Schedule

Your children aren't the only ones that thrive on structure. Set a work schedule for yourself and stick to it. Try to wake up at the same time every day and treat weekdays just as you did before. For most people, the morning is the time to get serious work done, so try to complete any difficult tasks as early in the day as you can.

If your "normal" work hours, prior to transitioning to remote work, were Monday - Friday 9am-5pm, try to mirror the same schedule.

ii. Mirror Pre-remote Work Schedule

If your "normal" work hours, prior to transitioning to remote work, were Monday - Friday 9am-5pm, try to mirror the same schedule.

Relying on an established routine will help make your transition to a less "structured" environment MUCH easier.

iii. Work to Remove Non-work Distractions

Now more than ever, it's essential to set boundaries when working remotely. This is because more than likely, you have your spouse, children and pets all in close quarters. Give your family signals as to when to leave you alone. When you have a family—particularly children or teens—at home when you're working, having an “off-limits” work space can help prevent interruptions.

Get rid of temptations. Close computer tabs not in use. Consider web browser plug-ins that block specific sites such as social media platforms during the time you're working. Refrain from turning on the TV “just for a minute,” and definitely don't install one near your work area.

C. **LESSON 3: Productivity Tips**

- Everyone who works remotely has to figure out when to work, where to work, and how to create boundaries between work and personal life.
- Working remotely, especially when working from home, means figuring out these issues and others. Here are 5 tips for leading a richer and more productive remote-work life.

Activity 3: Accordion Interaction

i. Create a Task List Every Morning

Setting goals is always a best practice, but especially so when you do not have work colleagues around you to suggest a meeting, or to start a discussion on getting things done or to check on your progress with a project.

You will need other mechanisms to help you stay on track and feel accomplished at the end of the day.

ii. Take Scheduled Breaks

Many people working from home think they have to be 100 percent productive and 100 percent focused the entire day. The reality is that we all need a break.

Research shows taking breaks will actually *improve* your productivity. Plan to get a bite to eat or walk outside for a short stroll—block some time off on your calendar.

iii. Over Communicate

Working remotely means you will not run into a colleague in the office kitchen or hallway and have that casual "chat" that will help you learn about something you didn't even know was going on or uncover details about something you were trying to get an update on. Figuring out how you communicate best with others is key to success in a "remote world".

No matter what your favorite coloration or communication tools are: Slack, Teams, Zoom etc., use them! Each serves a different purpose and each will help you and your team maintain cohesion.

You will also find that your colleagues have their own preferences, so it's nice to ask what those are, especially for communicating with your supervisor.

iv. Dress for success

Maintaining a daily routine of getting up, having a shower, and putting on a comfortable, but professional outfit is key when working from home.

Getting dressed helps you feel more productive because it signals to you that you're in work mode

While it's important to dress for work, Stevens said it's equally important to change out of your work clothes and into something more casual at the end of the day.

3. Assessment - Test Your Knowledge (* indicates correct response)

- A. What is the single most important tech factor to your remote workspace?
 - i. Your Internet Provider
 - ii. Your Computer
 - iii. Your Network Connection*
 - iv. Your Apps

- B. Creating a successful workspace starts with creating a _____ workspace.
 - i. Fill in the blank
 - ii. Acceptable response = separate*

- C. Plants have been proven to improve mood and boost productivity?
 - i. True*
 - ii. False