A Useful & Inspiring
Guide to
Working Remotely

For most of your career, you've likely worked in an office. You've been surrounded by familiar context and scenery. But now, the friendly co-workers, cleaners, bosses, desks and people you know by face only, with whom you exchange 'good mornings', have all disappeared into your laptop.

Your entire world has suddenly become your computer.

If you find your "digital" self to be less motivated or consistent than your "office" self - you, my friend, are not alone. It might be hard to admit, but humans are better at evolving slowly rather than suddenly.

Especially if "suddenly" means within hours.

Welcome to the new world of remote work. As an IT professional who has quite some experience working remotely, I've discovered a few things that have helped me tremendously over the years.

That's why I wanted to write this guide for you; to help you navigate the tricky waters of remote work, so that you can look back at this time that you worked remotely with personal power and pride.

Let's start with…

Your Delicious Time

One of the easiest things about working in an office is having a consistent and separate 'work' environment and 'home' environment.

That distinction goes out the window when you're home all day.

Even Marian Davidson, a news reporter for NBC Montana, would not appear on TV the way she appears on TV… at home.

Point being, your brain merges the reality of work with home and your schedule can suffer.

So here's a trick you can play with your brain. It's worked very well for me over the years:

Stick to the same work hours, exactly as you would when working in an office.

I know, I know - easier said than done; but here's the secret of why this works so well.

Once you train yourself to keep the same hours, your body and mind adapt to the same work "environment".

Like all things, focusing on what you can control is your highest leverage point.

So if being in the office is out of your control, maintaining the same work hours is in your control.

If you normally start work, let's say, at 9 am, then start remote work at 9 am.

If your lunch is usually at 12:30 pm, then start 'remote lunch' at 12:30 pm and get back to work when you normally do.

In my experience, here are the 3 big "Brain Benefits" of maintaining, to a "T", the same exact work hours:

BRAIN BENEFIT #1 - The Feeling of Satisfaction

I don't have to convince you of the obvious. When you finish a task, especially important ones, you LOVE it.
You love that uber-yummy, juicy, fulfilling feeling of finishing your work with cherries on top. The more YOU feel satisfied with your awesome work, the better YOU will feel.

The better you feel, the happier your home.

So, as Stephen Covey said, "Start with the End in Mind". In this case, the end being that satisfying feeling of a job well done.

Start with that in mind as you debate when to begin or end your work day.

BRAIN BENEFIT #2 - Discipline = Freedom

I have a friend, he's in his 50's and in tip-top shape. Another friend is in his 30's and…well, not so much.

The one in his 50's who looks great, shows up to work with boundless energy and enthusiasm and runs marathons - and does so because of his discipline.

The one who doesn't fit that description will likely not 'start', because it feels way too overwhelming to even begin.

The point is, in your discipline is your freedom.

While waking up at 5am and running for a few miles sounds daunting at first, soon enough it's one of the best parts of your day.

By sticking to the same work hours, day in and day out for as long as you're working remotely, you will feel free.

This paradox is a secret you likely already know: That by sticking to your work, consistently, you give yourself two wonderful gifts that, like a good wine, get even better with time.

You'll feel free and fulfilled. And who on earth doesn't want to feel that?

There is one extra benefit of feeling free and fulfilled by being Dr. Discipline…

BRAIN BENEFIT #3 - The Pleasure You're After (a.k.a 'Neural Pathways')

These days, every child and their dog knows Neuroscience 101. So excuse me for pointing out the obvious.
When you do something that gives you pleasure, the pleasure is felt by your brain being sent a spike of dopamine. The more times you do that thing, the more you train your brain to see that 'thing' as 'pleasure'. Where a neural 'pathway' is established between the action and the dopamine/pleasure experience.

In this example, the more consistently you show up and do your work, keeping the same hours, crushing your projects and completing your tasks with gusto - the more your brain establishes a 'pathway' between 'work' and 'pleasure', or 'satisfaction'.

Aside from the theoretical, your brain will *crave* work, because it associates it with pleasure.

So now that you're 'Mr. or Mrs. Inspiration' to all, being free and fulfilled, let's move on to the second element of working remotely…

Your Inspired Environment

Working in an office isn't simply working in an office. It's also working with other geniuses in that office.

While working with your peers, you've established all kinds of ways of working together. Discussing projects on the fly, giving someone that 'need it now' glance or going out for drinks to finish the week are all ways we experience and create our social work environment.

Now that you're home in your pajamas suit and tie, without any of your coworkers, you might be wanting some of that social fun and activity, along with your increased productivity.

Have no fear my friend. Because as remote as you might feel, there are some super-fun benefits to our new digital landscape.

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To start, let's cover your work space.

PERMANENT WORK SPACE

You want to show up to work, like a boss. So use this quick tip to feel like a boss with a simple set up.

Create a permanent work space. This lets your brain and spirit adjust to the *new* environment as if it's a *better* environment. Because you're setting the intention to make it that way, by making it that way.

Whether you live in a mansion or a small apartment, your work space is your new best friend. Here are a few things to help you establish your new happy work environment.

Of course, you know what works best for YOU. Here are some easy ways to enjoy your environment.
- Pictures *(loved ones, pets, mentors or even paintings)*
- Books *(whatever books get your mindset focused)*
- Inspired Quotes (*we love quotes because they simplify brilliance, in a bite-size format*)
- Office Chair (*this can be any chair, but make it the one you use for work*)

Plants ([10 best office plants](#))

RESOURCES: OFFICE SPACE

1. [Monitor Arms](#)
2. [Standing Desks](#)
3. [Wobble Boards for Standing Desks](#) ('passive' exercise while standing)
4. [Anti-Fatigue Comfort Mats](#)
5. BONUS: [An Exercise-Workstation](#)!
6. BONUS: [Seen HumanScale?](#)

Next up for the work environment is...

DRESS LIKE YOU'RE AT WORK (not at home)

Our minds are a funny, fascinating thing. Sure you *can* work in your PJs, but then your brain says, "Who cares about today? Not me, not one bit".

Oh sure it can be fun and relaxing once in a while, but your work is far too important.

Imagine you do wear a suit, even if no one's watching. How do you feel? You feel professional, possibly ridiculous and awesome.

That being said, you might as well feel super comfy looking super pro. So check out the resources below for some simple hacks.

RESOURCES: WORK CLOTHES

1. [Men's Health: 10 Ridiculously Comfortable Work Outfits](#)
2. [LifeHacker: Women's Work Clothes that are as Comfy as Yoga Clothes](#)

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REMOTE TOOLS

Being new to remote work can mean not even knowing how many remote tools are available these days. So here's a list.

RESOURCES: REMOTE TOOLS

1. COMMUNICATION

G Suite

Known as a "swiss army knife" of the digital work landscape, G Suite by Google supplies you with more than 60 apps for your teams' work *and* survival. Including Google Drive, Gmail, Google Docs, Calendar, Slides, Sheets and more.

Office 365

Just like Google, only Microsoft. Leading the digital office realm, Office 365, like it's friendly nemesis Google, fulfills your every remote work wish and dream. From document creation to team collaboration, email to calendars, Office 365 supplies you with more than the bare essentials. Including SharePoint, Teams, Outlook, Word, Yammer, PowerPoint and Excel.

Skype

Remember them? They're still here and are more than happy to give you instant messaging, voice and video calls from just about any device. Skype does offer an enterprise bundle if you,and your company, prefer. Another option is simply having it as personal backup should the occasion arise.

Zoom

The overnight success that was founded way back in 2011, has been crushing the remote work scene for many moons already. With the rapid rise of remote work, they might just be as famous as the Kardashians. Zoom is now the go-to for online meetings, video conferencing, and a most popular option for creating and delivering webinars.

Loom

If you're wondering if I put "Loom" after "Zoom" by accident, you'd be correct. With Loom you can create and send a short video that replaces text. So the next time you're writing an email or document and think this might be better said in a (hilarious) video, give Loom a try.

Front

Heard of email? Of course you have. Front's mission is to replace email at work, simply because we get too many. Positioning themselves as "Inbox for Teams", Front is designed to streamline your internal communications and workflow if you're dependent on email.

Drift

Maybe you've seen their book featured on Times Square, "Conversational Marketing". Even if you weren't in New York on that day, Drift created a hyper-used and useful chatbot tool to engage customers with. With Drift, you can automate your sales process into bite-size chats or conversations at scale. If you're in marketing or sales, Drift might give you a few new ideas for how to hit your KPIs or quotas.

2. COLLABORATION

Slack

When Slack stepped onto the scene back in 2013, they touted themselves as the "email killer", which worked well for them. Currently valued at $21 Billion, Slack is used by many millions of remote workers, from startups to enterprise teams, to communicate internally.

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams is designed for teams of all sizes. You'll use it for your internal chats, meetings, files and apps, live all in a single professional workspace.

Dropbox

Dropbox started as a simple solution for sharing files online. Now, they're more frequently used and favored as a way to backup files, for extra protection. You can use Dropbox to keep your documents and files in one place, or for more backup when needed.

CloudApp

Need to share something on your screen with a colleague instantly? Use CloudApp for screen sharing, video creation, and even GIFs from any device. As you might have guessed, all of this is via cloud. CloudApp uploads your chosen files to the cloud for you to then share with your team.

Lucidchart

The next time you want to show a workflow or concept as a visual process, use Lucidchart. You can also use it to visualize your own brainstorms into a step-by-step flow.

Calendly

In case you haven't seen another human use Calendly, this simple software lets others schedule meetings with you based on your availability, which is pre-selected by you. Eliminate costly back and forth "Got a minute" emails with a simple link to your Calendly.

3. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Asana

Named after the yoga pose and co-founded by Facebook co-founder, Dustin Moscovitz, this platform celebrates tasks done with rainbows and unicorns. Literally. This project management powerhouse lets you and your team organize, track and manage tasks. Asana's "to-do list" feature lets you set crystal clear tasks, goals and timelines in an easy-to-manage fashion. When you assign someone a task and they complete it, unicorns fly onto the screen with rainbows. Some say it's worth it just for that.

Monday

Like Office 365 to G Suite, Monday rivals Asana in ways only the most project loving fanatic notices and cares deeply about. Monday has colorful boards to keep track of all things "project", including who owns it and who's only in the loop. Create your own color-coordinated system so projects and tasks are tracked, measured and done. Rainbows not included.

Basecamp

Speaking of remote work, Basecamp wrote the book on it, "Remote: Office Not Required". Written by Basecamps' co-founders, who built the company with remote workers only, know a thing or two about managing projects efficiently. Used by millions and millions, Basecamp positions themselves as the "all in one toolkit for working remotely". I'm convinced. See for yourself. While you're at it, check out their other brilliant books here.

Trello

When it comes to straight-up "task management" Trello might just be your preferred choice. Trello is great for managing teams, tracking tasks, and getting your work done, one assignment at a time.

InVision

This beast of a platform is designed for web design and mobile app development teams. InVision puts the whole design process in your full control: from prototyping to versioning to client/team feedback. Goodbye storyboards, hello InVision.

4. PRODUCTIVITY

Evernote

Certain types of detail oriented, note-taking humans absolutely love and swear by Evernote. With Evernote, you organize, manage and track your notes with superman-like passion and efficiency. It can be your go-to app for capturing ideas, managing tasks or projects, organizing screenshots, making checklists, or saving things (like websites, recipes, or ideas) for later.

ToDoist

For the productivity enthusiasts who love to plan, schedule and prioritize tasks, welcome to heaven. With a grand canyon of features and capabilities, ToDoist will organize just about anything your productive heart desires. Works for both individuals and teams.

Figma

Teams manage their creative projects, from websites and pages to app designs, with Figma. Create, prototype and test your designs with inspired efficiency. Launch and complete your designs with gusto, from anywhere on the blue marble, we call earth.

GitHub

If you're a developer or engineer, you likely use GitHub already. And if you are a developer and have yet to meet GitHub, you might just feel like you met a certain kind of soul mate. 40 Million developers host, review, and manage their beautiful code on the now famous open-source platform. With GitHub, you'll automate workflows by building, testing, deploying, and running CI/CD, the way that works best for you and your team.

5. SECURITY

LastPass

You know how virtually impossible it is to remember all your passwords. After all, like me, you're a human. And in our digital and remote world, LastPass makes being a human much easier. How? By keeping all your passwords in one place. Use LastPass to remember current passwords and generate new ones, with Fort Knox level complexity.

Amazon Web Services (AWS)

Since 2006, AWS has led the way in cloud storage and hosting. Your entire company can store everything, every single file that ever was or ever will be, on AWS. In fact, now that you and your company went remote, your servers can also go remote with your very own private cloud on Amazon (EC2), securing your organization with pentagon-like status. If relevant, let me know and I'll do it all in a jiffy for you.

Atera

If you need to connect to your office computer from home, Atera created a solution that lets you effortlessly connect in minutes. Happy to help you set it up and show you how to use it, just send me a message or email. I'm here for you, always.

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Unleash Your Fun
FUN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION TOOLS

With a fully remote office, your communications with colleagues can become boring, tedious and lifeless. Unless you love getting a plethora of emails and messages that just say, "done", our relationships can become a bit stale, when working remotely.

Have no fear, because the creative gods are with you.

Here are just a few tools that can turn internal communication into fun experiences, that can even strengthen your work relationships.

1. Make Beautiful Designs
    a. Canva.com
    b. Getstencil.com
    c. Snappa.com
    d. Designbold.com
2. Turn Words into Animated Videos:
    a. Powtoon.com
    b. Animoto.com
    c. Vyond.com
    d. BONUS: JibJab *(their tagline is "be funny" ;)*

Now let's dig into having the mindset, body and heart of a remote superstar.
HOME 'GYM'

Here's something you already know:

Physical movement = happiness.

According to a 2010 study, participants who went through an 8-week yoga and meditation intensive reported having significant reductions in perceived stress.

You've heard of "runners high" and "yoga high" for a reason. By definition, working from home as well as being inside most of the day, means limited physical movement.

Get ahead of it by creating for yourself a physical routine, right inside your home. News flash - your body is all you need for a full on workout. You can always add some simple equipment. If a monk can master sitting all day, you can too.

TIP #1 - Keep it Simple

Most humans lose out on achieving "small wins" by turning them into "massive projects". If working out at home is new, keep it simple without overdoing it. Baby steps always work.

For the pros in the room, now is a great time to uplevel your game, one baby step at a time.

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TIP #2 - Too Hard? Get a Partner

If you can't stick to a plan, get a partner. This can be your spouse, partner, child, neighbor or remote friend, if need be. Often, in these cases, 1 + 1 = 3. "3", in this case being the achievement of your goal.

TIP #3 - Stick to It Like Glue

A friend of mine had a basketball coach in high school. The coach used to refer to 1:1 defense, where he had to guard one person "like glue". Stick to your workout plan in the same way. When commitment is your friend, victory is near.

RESOURCES: HOME WORKOUTS

1. [Beachbody](#) *(workouts from aerobics, pilates, dance, muscle, yoga, anything)*
2. [Yogaworks](#) *(from beginner to advanced, you'll find what your spirit needs)*
3. [7 At-Home Workout Routines](#) *(free!)*
4. [Aaptiv](#) *(thousands of voice-guided workouts at your fingertips)*
5. SEARCH: Google or Youtube for *"Home Workout Routine"*

MINDSET

I once heard this great quote, *"Circumstances don't change you, they reveal you."*

Working remotely can be a challenge or an opportunity, the choice is yours for the taking. By adapting to a positive mindset, your work will be positive. Your home will be more positive. And, obviously, vice versa.

Whether you're naturally oozing with positivity or not, "being the light" requires practice. How do you practice being a rock star of positivity, so you have the best remote work experience ever?

TIP #1 - Take 0:09 Minutes After Your Workout

The best part of a workout is often the 30 minutes after the workout. So take 0:09 minutes to meditate right after your workout.
Whether you're as practiced as the Dalai Lama or a meditation newbie, your brain will love these endorphin-rich guides:

1. Brain.fm *(both guided meditations and meditative sounds)*
2. Headspace *(Free + Paid option on iPhone and Android)*
3. Calm *(Free + Paid option on iPhone and Android)*
4. The Mindfulness App *(Free + Paid option on iPhone and Android)*

TIP #2 - Practice, Practice, Practice

Like the study mentioned above, signs of stress were significantly reduced by yoga and meditation, after 8 weeks. Not 8 minutes. If you're working remotely, this is a great opportunity to meditate after exercise, to achieve these benefits.

TIP #3 - Use the "Role Model" Mindset

The "Role Model" mindset says: Be the change you want to see in the world. In this case, not only are you filling your own mind with an inspired, powerful mindset - you're stepping into the role of "role model" for others.

TIP #4 - Expand Your Mind with a New, Specific, and Compelling Goal

If you're new to remote work, use this new period to expand your range of awesomeness. How? By setting for yourself a new and compelling goal.

Maybe you want to learn a master skill? Like cooking gourmet food or… just food? Writing your great American novel? Or perhaps develop the negotiation skills, just for fun, of an FBI seasoned pro.

You can check out [Masterclass](#) and join. Or, for absolutely nothing, you can peruse their classes to get ideas.

Then, go on YouTube to search for that specific topic.

For example, let's say you're now uber-inspired to learn how to do "Interior Design". Search for it on Youtube and you'll be blown away by how much information is available for free.

A pro tip on setting a goal for yourself is to make it specific and measurable.

So, if you are learning how to be the next Einstein of Interior Design, here's how the goal can look.

"Within 30 Days I'll Design Our Living Room Like a (Semi) Pro Interior Designer"
Other examples to storm your brain with some fun:

"Within 4 Days, I'll do an 'Allen Iverson' Crossover"
"In 90 Days I'll Finish My Autobiography"
"In 21 days I'll have a Comedic Stand-Up Sketch that Gets at Least 1 Laugh from a Stranger"

You get the picture.

And that my friend, might just be the perfect way to finish this guide. Use this time to do your best work, showing up as the best version of yourself, by setting for yourself a new, measurable, and compelling goal. That goal can be both work-related or simply personal, so you'll look back at this time with some personal power and pride.

If this was useful and inspiring, please share with a friend or colleague.

I'm here to help you and your company be more streamlined and productive in any environment.

Here's to you my friend - go out and crush it.