



Mindfulness While Working From Home

Many people are working from home during the pandemic. Rush clinical physiologist, Sheila Dowd, recommends the following strategies to help you maintain your well-being while working from home.

- 1. Stick to your routine.** Since kindergarten, we've been trained to have a routine. Our bodies and brains like predictability. It helps us feel in control. Keeping yourself on a routine when there is so much uncertainty is a good way to create that sense of control.
- 2. Use your commute time for self-care.** Since there is no need to travel back and forth to work, try dedicating that time – whether its 20 minutes or two hours – for self-care. Get exercise, take up a long put-off hobby, start a book you've wanted to read, etc.
- 3. Create a mental work zone.** If you live with others, carving out both space and time may prove difficult. If you have a separate room where you can close the door to get privacy, put up a sign that defines your work hours and request that you won't be disturbed when the door is closed. Putting on headphones can be a great way to create that sense of separation and expectation of privacy when you aren't able to distance yourself.
- 4. Schedule "worry time."** If stress or anxiety is keeping you from focusing on your work, schedule "worry time" into your daily routine and find a place that is distinct from where you work. "Decide that you're only going to think about your problems from 5-5:30," Dowd says. "If that issue pops into your head any other time during the day, tell yourself you are not going to think about it until 5 p.m. because you need to focus on work."
- 5. Go "out" for lunch.** It's important to physically step away from your workspace for a midday meal. Even if you just literally move from one side of the dining room table to another.
- 6. Don't bring work "home."** When it's quitting time, leave your work in your workspace and resolve not to think about it until the next day. Allow yourself to decompress and enjoy your time off, refusing to let work-related issues creep into your personal time.
- 7. Straighten up after work.** Straightening up at the end of the day can help you feel more organized and less chaotic. Research shows that a messy living and working space can have a negative effect on your mental health, contributing to depression and anxiety.
- 8. Adjusting to the new normal.** Everyone will experience the shift to remote work differently and things might not always go smoothly. You may have moments or days where you feel frustrated, anxious or unmotivated. But, the good news is, we're all resilient and adaptable by nature. Even those who are struggling will find ways to thrive within whatever the new normal turns out to be.