



COVID-19 and working from home

For employees

As workers in NSW and all over Australia transition to working from home in response to COVID-19, it's important to understand that you may be unable to carry out many of your usual tasks in the same way while working from home.

This may impact your physical and mental capacity to perform and be as motivated and productive as you would under normal circumstances.

It's important to understand these are not normal circumstances and to exercise compassion towards yourself and others during this time.

How to work from home effectively

Set up your workstation

- Establish a workstation at home. Having a designated work space will help you to keep work and home psychologically separate. If you don't have a work desk or a study, consider other options such as the dining table.
- Make sure you have a comfortable chair that can be adjusted to the appropriate height.
- Position your computer monitor or laptop so that the screen sits at or slightly below eye level.
- Make sure you have good lighting and minimal noise disturbance.
- Consult your organisation's policies and procedures for working from home

Establish a routine that helps maintain work/life balance

- Prepare for a normal work day, as you would if you were going in to the office.
- Start and finish work at the times you normally would to set boundaries for time for your personal life.

Stay connected with your team

- Staying socially connected with your employer and colleagues will help to keep you motivated and productive, as well as provide you with social support.
- Organise regular video conferences with your employer and colleagues.
- Utilise available applications, such as Slack or Microsoft Teams, to facilitate informal discussions with your employer and colleagues and to continue working on team projects.

Looking after your health and wellbeing

- Stay physically active while maintaining physical distancing. This could include going for a walk around the block or developing a physical activity routine you can do in your backyard or living room.
- Eat well
- Stay socially connected with your friends and family using technology such as online chat forums, phone calls, and videoconferencing applications.
- Unless it's essential for your work tasks, keep your consumption of COVID-19 news updates to a minimum. This will help to minimise distractions and reduce stress and anxiety associated with the COVID-19 situation.
- Practice self-compassion.

Set realistic goals each day

- Plan your work day and set daily goals to maximise productivity:
 - To-Do lists and SMART goals are a great way to manage your tasks and maintain productivity.
 - Make sure that these goals are realistic, considering any constraints you might have while working from home and the effect COVID-19 may be having.
 - Discuss realistic expectations regarding priorities and timelines with your employer and colleagues.
 - Re-evaluate goals and timelines if you find they are no longer realistic.
- Make an “if-then” plan for dealing with interruptions to your work time (e.g., if situation ‘X’ happens then I will do ‘Y’ to get back on track).
- Here are some useful tools to help manage your time and keep you on track:
 - Trello (free project management software)
 - Todoist (free to-do list software)
 - Strict Workflow (a google chrome plugin that blocks timewaster websites during your work time)

Protect yourself against cybercrime

- Make sure your antivirus software is installed and activated.
- Enable encryption on devices and files containing sensitive information, including those stored on hard drives and USB sticks.
- Ask your employer if they can set up a VPN for you to use if you are accessing workrelated data or websites using your home WiFi.
- Backup your files regularly and to multiple locations (e.g., hard drive, cloud locations, or another device).

Working from home if you have children or are a carer

- If you have children at home or are a carer, some of the above working from home guidelines might not be suitable for you – that's okay.
- Re-evaluate your normal routine and decide what can be maintained and what parts might need to change to make working from home more effective. This might mean working outside of standard work times or taking more frequent breaks to attend to children or loved ones in need of care.
- Communicate regularly with your employer and colleagues so that they understand your constraints and can provide you with support.

It is important to get support from someone you trust.

**Speak to a health care professional or, if available, a mental health specialist
if you feel you need more support.**

Helpful resources and support

[Beyond Blue](#) - Phone: 1300 22 4636 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). [Beyond Blue online chat](#).

[eheadspace](#) - confidential mental health and wellbeing support for young people (12 - 25 years) and their families, including information, support, and health services. Phone: 1800 650 890 (9am - 1am, 7 days a week). [eheadspace online chat](#).

[MensLine](#) - professional telephone and online support and information service for Australian men. Phone 1300 78 99 78 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). [MensLine online counselling](#).

[Mindspot](#) - free telephone and online service for people with stress, worry, anxiety, low mood or depression. It provides online assessment and treatment for anxiety and depression and can help you find local services. Call 1800 61 44 34 (8am - 8pm, Monday - Friday; 8am-6pm, Saturday).



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