

# WORKING REMOTELY DURING COVID-19 CONTAINMENT

After [WHO declared Covid-19 a pandemic](#), more and more organizations are asking their people to work from home. Working remotely is an attractive proposition if you don't do it often and you may relish the variety. But it quickly becomes apparent that performing effectively from a remote environment requires certain resources and skills.

No matter how comfortable your sofa is, it wasn't ergonomically designed for you to work 8+ hours a day on a laptop. If you want to perform effectively (and with concern for your own spine) you'll need to find a better place to sit and work that is more like a desk set up.

Video calls will replace many meetings, which means your boss, colleagues and even clients will get a close-up view of your living quarters. Yes, it's your personal space and yes, there is some grace given for the unusual situation that we face. But it's worth looking behind you before broadcasting your camera and checking if what's around you is consistent with the professional brand you want to project at work.

A commonly felt benefit of working from home is that you can concentrate better with fewer interruptions and be more productive. This is true, especially when it's occasional, but when it's for a prolonged period or if it becomes the norm for you, you need to watch out for a few things and upskill yourself in some others:

- Watch out for tunnel vision, where you become so focused on doing your own work that you forget to communicate, involve and collaborate with others.
- This unusual working environment coupled with the anxiety arising from health and economic concerns triggers your cognitive biases so be extra careful with decision-making during this period.
- Simulate spontaneous interaction. If every conversation is scheduled, the conversation tends to go straight to the task and it's easy to forget the organic chatter that connects us as humans.
- Beware the opportunity for workaholism to go unchecked. Left alone to work from home, there are none of the usual external cues that can serve to keep some people on the healthy side of commitment and engagement (e.g. empty office, lights off, people around who ask about your wellbeing).

An increase in social distancing as a strategy for containing Covid-19 means that everyone will need help from coworkers and managers to stay productive and engaged in their work. If you're a manager who suddenly has a virtual team working for you, you'll need to make extra effort to be visible and available to team members. We encourage teams to use video communication wherever possible, rather than just audio alone, as the visual cues enable a more organic flow of conversation and a closer, richer, human connection.