

## Top tips to optimise health, wellness & personal performance while working from home

Simple strategies to help you:

- Balance your life
- Eat for health, energy & mood
- Get fit and stay fit
- Sleep well
- Manage your time
- Create healthy habits for the new normal



## WORKING FROM HOME: BALANCE YOUR LIFE

### Work-life balance?

It was hard enough before lockdown to balance life and switch gears between our professional and personal lives. Suddenly when working at home there isn't even a change of scene or a journey to and from work to help maintain a separation and many people are forced to attempt to work and relax in the same space.

So what are the best ways to maintain balance in your life?

### Set your working hours

Sounds obvious but if you don't do it, you'll check emails as soon as you get up and won't stop until you go to bed.

### Protect your boundaries

Communicate your ideal work times to those who need to know, specifically work colleagues and family members.

### Stay focused, get results, move on

Don't spend too long on any single task. Short, sharp bursts of work will keep your energy up. Avoid too much multi-tasking and create some new rituals to help you change state between one mode of thinking and another. For example, when you finish a Zoom call go to the window, look at the sky, check your posture and take a few deep breaths before moving on to project planning. This will ensure you work effectively through the day and can finish on time.



### Get into work mode

One way to do this is a walk round the block to 'commute' to your home work space while physically moving yourself into a different frame of mind. You can do the same at the end of the day to shift your mind out of work mode and get ready for your evening.

### Tackle the right things at the right times

You might not be able to control your workload completely but aim to set up a structure where you can attend to your most important items when you're at your most alert. Schedule your less demanding tasks for moments of the day when you usually feel slightly lower on resources. Pay attention to how you work over a few days and you'll soon notice a pattern.

## WORKING FROM HOME: BALANCE YOUR LIFE

### Listen to your mind and body

It's natural to experience an ebb and flow with your energy levels each day and while there are plenty of things one can do to optimise energy, it's important to tune into your biorhythms and use them to your advantage.

If you're a morning person then aim to tackle your important work tasks early on which might mean recruiting support on the domestic front. If later in the day is your best time you might want to complete less demanding tasks prior to this period so that your mind is clearer and your to do list shorter when you're ready to get stuck into the important stuff.

### Be realistic

Although it may not be possible to take charge of your entire schedule and there may need to be some negotiation and compromise between you, colleagues and family members, a proactive system where you're in charge of your time for a portion of your week – even one or two days a week – is better than feeling like you're firefighting every day.

### Have a life

Remind yourself about all the things you like to do outside of work. Make a list and schedule these things into your week.

You must have clear times allocated to family, hobbies, friends etc or there's a danger that work time will just keep on expanding.

Read our blog: *Be effective, not just busy while working from home.*

<https://bit.ly/2P5j2oC>



## WORKING FROM HOME: HEALTHY EATING

Chances are you'll be working not too far from the kitchen, in fact, you might even be working in the kitchen. This has led to a lot of people eating more often than they did when they were office based and sometimes eating unexpected choices at various times of the day.

How exactly do you keep your food routine on the straight and narrow when working at home?

### **Hungry or thirsty?**

When you think you're hungry you might be thirsty so grab a glass of water before you head for a snack.

### **Hungry or bored?**

If you think you're hungry but deep down you know you probably aren't because you ate not long ago, you might just be bored. Sit with the feeling for 5-10 minutes and see if it persists.



### **Try switching tasks**

Sometimes we seek out food just for something to do or for a break, but often a change of activity will be more helpful than a trip to the fridge. Make a plan to switch up your work tasks regularly through the day and avoid spending too much time on any particular activity.

Too long on one job creates a risk that your mind begins to wander and your thoughts turn to food and drink to break the tedium. The danger here is that all tasks take much longer than they should. Much better to take a break, work on something else and return to the original tasks once your mind is recharged by working in a different way. An occupied mind doesn't obsess about snacks.

### **Avoid temptation by shopping more strategically**

If your kitchen is stocked only with options that you've decided are part of your healthy eating plan there will be less temptation to veer off track.

### **Plan your food schedule and stick to it**

Decide in advance the right times for you to eat, pre-plan your best options for all meals and snacks and then follow your plan. The times you eat should be based around when you know you'll be hungry enough to eat but not so hungry that you'll overeat or be drawn towards high sugar or high fat options.



### Suffering at the hands of work from home inactivity?

One thing lots of people miss about office life is the opportunity to get their daily steps in. Others have missed the gym, while the lack of team sports has led to much reduced activity levels for some.

On a positive note, what we've also seen is plenty of people coming up with creative solutions to staying active. Things like recreating work 'activity' with a fake commute to get the steps in, or replacing steps with some type of home, garden or park workout.

Since April we've been running workout webinars for audiences all over the world and they all say the same things:

*'I didn't realise there were so many workouts you could do at home with minimal kit'*  
*'I can't believe how much I've achieved in just 15 / 20 / 30 minutes'*  
*'It's great to have the structure of regular exercise slots otherwise I wouldn't prioritise it'*  
*'I feel much better now than I did before the session'*



Others have channelled their competitive streak from real life team sports to group challenges and accountability online via social media, activity trackers and communities.

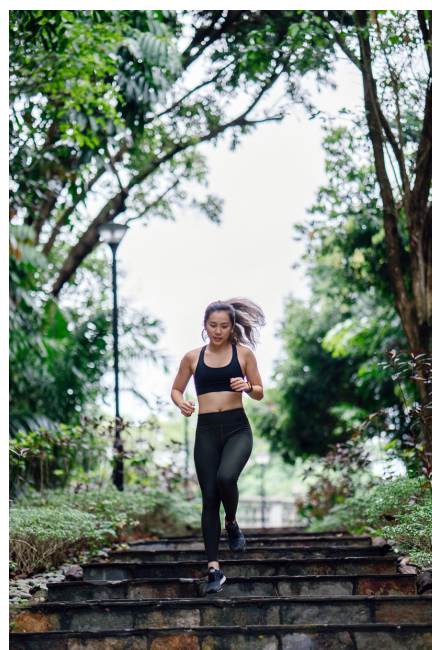
### How to maintain a regular workout schedule when working from home

The key to keeping active is to stay focused on why exercise and activity matters to you and regularly list all the benefits. Multiple positive associations with exercise will ensure that you'll always find creative ways to keep your workout schedule intact no matter what circumstances you find yourself in. The desire to 'get fit', 'tone up', or 'lose weight' will only get you so far. How many other benefits can you think of to keep activity as a priority in your schedule?

### Keep your eyes on the prize

Here are some benefits of exercise that people regularly report back to us. Create your own list and remember that it's important that your list of benefits is longer than your list of excuses! Think about the internal dialogue you sometimes use to avoid getting active and replace objections such as, 'I'm tired', 'It's too cold', 'It's too hot', 'I'm too busy' with positive drivers like:

- It'll boost my energy
- It lifts my mood
- It's a great way to manage stress
- It gives me a sense of achievement
- It gives me time to think
- It's a great way to boost creative thinking and solve problems
- It's a good way to spend time with / get time away from my family
- I want to be a strong role model for my children
- It's a break in the day
- It's gives me time to catch up with my music / podcasts / audiobooks
- It prevents my body from seizing up
- I enjoy it



Once you have your list of benefits, post them where you'll see them every day to keep you motivated.

### **\*Bonus content – Beat Back Pain\***

Not all work from home set ups are ideal with some people hunched over kitchen counter tops and others using ironing boards as desks. Many more are hunched over laptops all day long which can be tough on the body.

Read our 4 top tips to avoid back pain.

<https://bit.ly/30agVq2>

## WORKING FROM HOME: SLEEP WELL

Whether you're struggling to get to sleep, stay asleep or are experiencing unusual dreams, the change in our daily routines since March, combined with the uncertainty about what's coming next, has had a major impact on sleep routines.

How can you optimise sleep while working from home?

### Work with what you've got

There are relatively few people whose body clock and ideal sleep pattern fit in precisely with society's timetable and the requirements of your family and your job, so the first thing to do is accept that circumstances may dictate that you have to get up a little earlier than would be ideal for you, or you may need to stay awake a little longer than you'd choose if left to your own devices

That said, you can still make a conscious effort to create a routine for yourself that allows you to sleep well while providing you with the time to do what you need to do when you're awake.

### Stick to your routine

Irregular sleeping hours can create what's known as social jet lag so aim to follow your chosen sleep routine seven nights a week.

It may feel great to 'catch up' on missed sleep at the weekends but if this leaves you wide awake on Sunday night there's a risk you won't feel great for the start of the working week and it could be Wednesday before you catch up with yourself. Shifting time like this every week will take a toll in the medium to long-term.



### Think twice about your daily choices

Ideally we'd all like to feel alert and engaged while we're awake and relaxed and refreshed after a good night's sleep. The key to both is to think about everything you do during the day in relation to how it could affect your sleep that night.

Caffeine can perk you up but it can also impact your sleep routine hours later. Sugary snacks can feel like the right thing in the day but can disturb blood sugar levels which can affect the quality of your sleep.

## WORKING FROM HOME: SLEEP WELL

The same goes for too much stress throughout the day. It may feel as though a bit of stress is good to get you going and get things done, and it can be as long as you have ways to balance your stress levels before you try to unwind and get a restful sleep, so just always be mindful of the level of pressure that helps you perform at your best and know the tipping point beyond which you risk negative consequences.

### Design your personal pre-sleep routine

Identify the sequence of events that you know will result in you falling asleep quickly and having a quality sleep.

You may need to experiment with a few different approaches but soon you'll have a strategy that tells you when to have your last meal or snack of the day, when to turn off the TV, when you put your phone / laptop / tablet away and what you do to persuade your mind and body you're relaxed. This might be reading, meditating or deep breathing.



If you are prone to waking in the night, decide in advance what you'll think and do if this happens. If you worry that when you wake it'll take ages to get back to sleep, chances are, that's exactly what will happen.

If you plan an approach where, if you wake in the night you then read, practice deep breathing or even write down anything that's on your mind or think about reasons why you might have awoken and what you can do to address these situations tomorrow, you can relax in the knowledge that as you work through this process you'll be preparing yourself to return to sleep very soon.

Above all, remember that you may not be able to follow your ideal sleep routine every night, but you can take control to ensure that on balance and in the medium term you get sufficient sleep, and in the short term you do what you can to optimise the quality of every hour of sleep you do get.

**Try these 2 quick tips for improving sleep while working from home:**

<https://bit.ly/3i2EO9d>



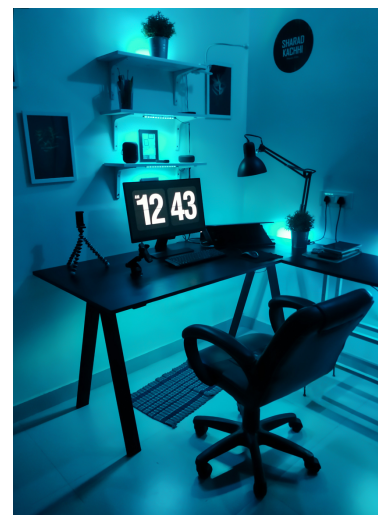
### 5 Top tips for managing your time

- Rather than thinking about spending time, think about investing it. What return on your investment will you be looking for with how you choose to spend each hour of your day?
- Keep notes on where your time goes and plan to make adjustments week by week focusing on doing less of what you don't want to do and more of what you do want to do.
- Have a clear idea of what your ideal week looks like. Regularly visualise yourself running your routine to make this plan a reality. Share your vision with the people who may have an influence of whether you're able to achieve it or not. If they know what you're aiming for, they will help you.
- Regularly review how you compile your daily / weekly list of priorities. Are there any tasks on your list that can be done differently or even removed from your to do list to make way for things you'd rather be doing?
- Review how efficient you are in various areas of life. Do you do things at the times when you are able to do them in the most effective way. Scheduling tasks at the wrong times means they could take longer than they need to or maybe even have to be repeated. Sometimes a small shift in the order in which you do things can make a huge change to the effectiveness of the day.

For more tips on time management, read our blog:

**Wellness, performance & time management: 7 ways to free up an extra hour in the day.**

<https://bit.ly/2WDMohX>



## WORKING FROM HOME: HEALTHY HABITS & THE NEW NORMAL

No one knows what the future holds for how we work, travel, socialise and take holidays. One thing is for sure, the healthier, happier and more resourceful we all are, the better we'll be positioned to deal with whatever comes.

### Getting great results with wellbeing is simple when you know how

It boils down to a straightforward 10-step process. Anyone who follows each of these steps is GUARANTEED positive results with their health, wellbeing and personal performance. Try it for yourself or pass the strategy to others in the business who you think might find it useful.

1. Be very clear on the wellbeing results you are going to achieve
2. Be specific about when you will achieve these results
3. Identify what you currently *know* that will help you reach your goals quickly
4. Identify what you currently *do* that will help you reach your goals quickly
5. Identify any gaps in your wellbeing knowledge that could slow your progress towards your goals. Find out how you can plug these gaps
6. **Sketch out a personal wellbeing plan that includes a selection of key ideas, attitudes, strategies, routines and habits which you think will help you achieve your desired results.**

**Your plan should be a blue-sky vision of the daily lifestyle choices, activities and decisions that you know deep down are right for you, your objectives and your circumstances**

7. Put your plan into action immediately
8. **Use your plan to take consistent, daily action towards your goals**
9. Review your plan regularly, judging it against your desired time line and results, and make adjustments accordingly. Experiment with new behaviours to speed up progress or amend your deadline to ensure it is realistic.
10. Celebrate success and update your goals regularly. Always have specific targets in mind, even if the target is to maintain your current wellbeing results. If you have a goal you can measure progress at every stage and every lifestyle choice you make can be judged in relation to your targets. Without a goal, daily choices become blurry, reactive and ill-defined.

## WORKING FROM HOME: NEXT STEPS

### How we can help

We deliver health and wellness webinars that engage and motivate teams and individuals and energise businesses.

### Who we work with

You can see from our client list that our experience covers a range of business sectors across international organisations. Within these organisations we work with staff at all levels operating in a whole host of job functions. We help all members of staff create a personal wellbeing solution that fits their life and really works.



### The results we get

#### For businesses

*'The whole team really enjoyed having time devoted to themselves and their needs. They've really benefited from the new knowledge they have.'*

#### For individuals

*'I feel significantly better and have loads more energy. Thanks - a few simple undertakings making a real difference in my life.'*

### Your next steps to improve colleague health, wellness & performance

Give us a call on 020 8995 1302 or email [info@the-tonic.com](mailto:info@the-tonic.com) to find out how we can help your business.