

Working From Home Checklist

7 Tips to Get you Started

1

CREATE LEARNED ASSOCIATIONS: A lot of our behavior is affected by associations that we have learned! For example, if you associate your desk with work, you'll be more likely to have the instinct to do work when sitting at your desk. If you associate your couch with TV, you'll feel more like watching TV than working when sitting on your couch.

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NOW YOU TRY: Select a physical location in your home that will be your "office." If it's in your bedroom, it can be helpful to physically section it off from the rest of the room (with a folding screen or a bookshelf, for example). What location did you choose? _____
When you're sitting there, only do work. If you want to do something else, leave your "office." Similarly, don't work in your pajamas! Change your clothes, even though you're staying at home. In fact, wear a bowtie. Wear a power suit and a bowtie. Your cat will love it. What else can you do to create an association with work in your home? (For example, lighting a candle with a particular scent, or playing particular music?) _____

2

CONNECT WITH YOUR MOTIVATION: It's helpful to remind yourself why you are doing the work that you're doing – it builds motivation and makes work feel more meaningful.

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NOW YOU TRY: What got you interested in this work in the first place? What do you value that connects to the work? What future outcome do you hope will happen as a result? Envision your future self – the person you are accomplishing these goals for! Take 5 minutes and write down some thoughts about your motivations.

3

BE ACCOUNTABLE TO OTHERS: Even though you are working from home, you can set up phone or video-chat meetings to stay accountable. Accountability and social support are both helpful for goal achievement, so reach out to others!

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NOW YOU TRY: Reach out to instructors or TFs, find a "buddy" who is also trying to stay productive and set up periodic check-ins, or schedule times with friends to work simultaneously over video-chat. Pick at least one strategy and make contact!

4

REWARD YOURSELF: Set up a system to give yourself little rewards when you finish a task – like a walk around the block or a funny YouTube clip. Just try to hold off until you finish the task that you've scheduled, and then once it's done, treat yourself. You deserve it!

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NOW YOU TRY: Pick 3 tasks to reward yourself for and plan 3 rewards.

5

SET SMARTER GOALS: A lot of goals get avoided because large chunks of work sound stressful. Practice refining your goals and breaking them up into smaller, more manageable, short-term goals. For example, if your goal is to write a thesis by the end of the year, what is the first step that you can do within the next two days?



NOW YOU TRY: Write down 1 goal you have for the next month. Now make it SMART.

Specific: what exactly do you want to achieve? Be clear and specific in describing what the goal is. Try to break up your goal into at least 3 smaller steps.

Measurable: How will you know when you have reached this goal? What concrete indicator can you use to track success?

Achievable: Is your goal realistic and achievable in the time that you have? If not, what smaller goal could you start with to work toward this bigger goal in the future?

Relevant: Will it make a difference in your life to achieve this goal right now? If not, try to select a goal that is more important to you.

Time-Bound: Is now the right time to do this? If so, set a time by which you want to achieve each step of your goal.

6

MAKE A SCHEDULE: As much as it seems nice to have endless open time, it does not usually go very well. Schedules are important for adhering to a predetermined plan rather than relying on how you feel in the moment. Having and sticking to a schedule can make all the difference.



NOW YOU TRY: Create a schedule for 1 week. Be sure to build in each step from your SMART goal! Schedule breaks and meals. Before you know it, you'll be checking things off your to-do list. **TIP** – make use of our activity scheduling webinar to help with this!

7

WELLBEING > PRODUCTIVITY: It hopefully goes without saying, but productivity is WAY less important than health and safety. Take care of yourself and loved ones - try to stay at home to prevent spread, and do what you can to protect your wellbeing in the meanwhile. Sometimes we try to push ourselves when we actually need to ask for help or understanding – from ourselves and others.



NOW YOU TRY: Ask yourself – is there something I need right now that I haven't paid attention to? Is there something I need to ask of an instructor, advisor, or someone else? Could I exercise more self-compassion?