

Staying Focused at Home – Guide for Remote Workers

Adapted from MindTools

The distractions of home, along with the isolation and lack of supervision that often comes with remote working, can cause you to lose focus and damage your productivity.

Here are some ways to stop that happening:

1. **Motivate yourself.** The following techniques can keep you motivated and on track with achieving maximum productivity:
 - Change your mindset and think positively about the work that you need to do
 - Focus on the purpose of your work and why you do what you do. This can help you see the bigger picture
 - List the positive outcomes of your work
 - Let your colleagues and manager know the time and day that you will complete your work and use their expectations to get the job done
 - Avoid procrastinating as this will only prolong things. Just jump in and do it!
 - Break down daunting tasks into smaller 'easy wins'
2. **Minimise distractions.** Which distractions tend to affect you most? Maybe you get caught up doing household chores, or suffer interruptions from family or friends. Beating these distractions could be as simple as shutting the door! If this isn't possible then create set times within your daily work schedule for these activities.
3. **Reward yourself.** Find ways to make each task more enjoyable and rewarding in itself, as well as giving yourself "treats" when they're done. For example, allow yourself your favourite specialty coffee for completing a task successfully.
4. **Control your social media.** Think carefully about which notifications to keep on, and which to mute until later. Allocate time slots for checking your phone. Make this part of rewarding yourself when you complete a task.
5. **Know your goals.** Along with short-term, task-related goals, make sure that you're also clear about the wider career goals and purpose you're striving to achieve. Keeping these in mind will motivate you to do your best work, whatever your location.
6. **Create a workspace that works!** Make it a place where you'll enjoy spending time. However, you also need to be clear that it's a place of work.
 - Add a few "office" touches to encourage you to be more productive
 - Personalise your workspace, with fun posters or family photos

- Check you can sit comfortably. If not, you'll likely find plenty of excuses to get up and go somewhere else! A high-quality office chair is one of the best investments you can make
- Is your desk big enough and suitable for the work that you do? Make sure that you have everything you need within easy reach
- The other important piece of equipment is a door that you can close! It's almost impossible to work effectively at home if there are other people nearby

7. Get organised. Being organised in your workspace and in your work action plan can help you to stay focused and less distracted.

- Keep your workspace tidy. Spend a few minutes at the end of each session sorting out things like paperwork or empty coffee cups. Clear away as much of it as you can when you switch off for the day
- Organise your work into clearly defined actions/projects with specific deadlines. It's easy to lose focus if you're working on several different projects at once

8. Master time management

- Create a schedule to manage your work efficiently and keep yourself on track. Don't forget to take breaks regularly
- Organise and prioritize key tasks with a To-Do List. This will help you to avoid procrastinating, or losing focus by switching between tasks and add an extra layer of structure to your day
- Have a list of "in between" tasks. These are relatively minor jobs that should take 10 minutes or less to complete, and which you can fit into your day when a gap opens up
- Create an activity log to help you keep tabs on how much time you spend on each task. This lets your manager know how you're spending your time and can also help you to see when you're at your most productive, so that you can carry out complex tasks during those parts of the day