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Subject: Telecommuting Tips for Working Remotely at UHD

Good afternoon,

With the majority of UHD employees telecommuting through April 3, 2020, ESO understands how the transition to remote work can be daunting and a bit disorienting. To help you with the transition, we've compiled a list of helpful tips on working remotely.

In addition to the tips provided below, please find links to articles and trainings from UHD's Employee Assistance program (UTEAP) and LinkedIn Learning under the [Additional Resources for Working Remotely](#) link to help you become successful while working remotely. Likewise, take advantage of the Virtual Gator Learning: Remote Work Productivity, being offered on Monday, March 30, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. via Zoom meetings.

We hope these tips and links will make the transition easier. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

1. Create a dedicated workspace

Initially you will want to set up a workspace that is only for work and nothing else. This way, you can work minimizing distractions. If possible, turn a room with a door into your office.

2. Set regular office hours

It is easy to overwork or underwork while telecommuting. To avoid these pitfalls and ensure work/life balance, set up consistent work hours. Some interruptions can't be avoided but do your best to set work hours and stick to them. When the workday is over, leave work at the office and turn off your computer or put it to sleep. Do this to make sure you recharge and maintain your health.

3. Plan your workday

Understand your personal productivity, whether you are more productive during the morning or later in the day, and plan your work around your most productive hours. Set up a schedule to ensure you have a consistent work schedule and make a list of tasks and due dates to keep up with your work.

4. Get ready for the workday

It's easy to stay in your pajamas all day, but it really isn't a healthy work habit. The way you dress can affect you mentally. Beyond psychologically getting you in the right mindset for work, you'll be ready to handle any kind of video chat or check-in with your supervisor or a colleague. You'll be prepared to get work done, and you will be mentally and physically prepared for the day. All of these help you transition to perform confident and effective remote work.

5. Take breaks

Make time for regular breaks. Sitting at your computer for hours on end is not healthy. Walk away from your desk for a few minutes, stretch, take a brief walk or walk around your house. Remember to take a lunch break as well. If others are home during your lunch break, use this time to socialize and connect with them. Your lunch break is also a great time to get some exercise but remember to maintain social distancing.

6. Reduce distractions

Becoming distracted is easy when working from home. There's always chores around the home, like laundry and dishes, that need to be done. Additionally, some family members may interrupt you while you work. Be kind and gentle with yourself and others. Hold off handling household chores until after you are finished working for the day and respond with compassion and understanding when explaining your need for focus to loved ones.

7. Schedule meetings close together

If scheduling meetings with your team, try to schedule meetings back-to-back within the same time block. This helps you and your team avoid multiple stops and starts throughout the workday.

8. Become an email pro

With remote work, email is your primary form of communication. Use email to share with your team important information that should be documented. Also, take this time to work on improving how you communicate through email. Work on how to craft concise, friendly and accurate emails. LinkedIn Learning offers a variety of learning activities geared to business writing, grammar, crafting emails, etc.

9. Use the right tools

If possible, collect all the right tools to get the job done. If you cannot set up your computer in a quiet place, use headphones to help you stay focused. If you don't know how to use Zoom to stay in touch with your coworkers or attend a virtual meeting, learn how through LinkedIn Learning or UHD IT. For assistance with the technical demands of telecommuting, please check out [UHD IT's Telecommuting Resource webpage](#) or contact the IT Help Desk at 713-221-8031.

10. Be social

For some, it's not hard becoming a loner when working remotely. To avoid this, make sure you schedule time to be social with others, whether it is with family in your home or through remote options like Skype or FaceTime. Remaining social is important to maintain mental health.

11. Set boundaries

One of the most important things you can do when working from home is to set clear boundaries on the people that share your space. This is easier said than done with children home from school. Whether the people in your home are adults or children they cannot understand your expectations unless you clearly communicate with them. Explain the rules about what they can and cannot do during your work time. Setting up boundaries helps you work more efficiently and helps reduce stress and misunderstandings that could lead to arguments.

12. Take sick days

If you are unwell, take sick time. It can be easy to fall into the trap of powering through your illnesses. Taking sick days will help you rest and get better sooner.

13. Overcommunicate

An important aspect of working remotely is the need to overcommunicate since in-person communication is removed from the picture. Make sure everyone who needs to know your schedule and availability, has it. If your schedule changes, communicate that as well. When projects are completed, communicate that to those involved. You don't need to write extensively about your every move but you do need to make sure you communicate even more than you did before starting remote work.

14. End your day with a routine

You may already understand the importance of starting your day with a routine, but it is equally important you end your day with a routine while working remotely as well. By setting an end-of-day routine you create habits that help you know the workday is over. Your end-of-day routine could be as simple as shutting down your computer or going for a walk to get some down time. Whatever you decide, do it consistently to help ensure you stop work when you are scheduled and are not tempted to check emails or work on one more task later in the evening.

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