

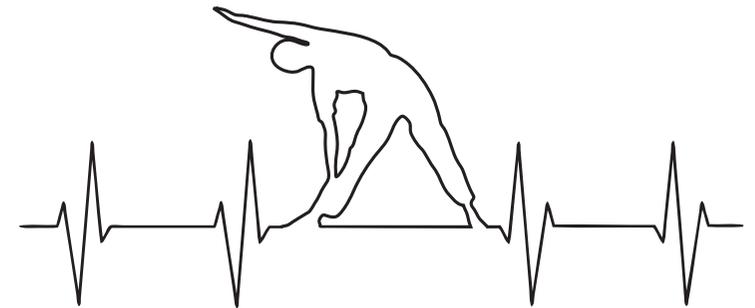
Staying motivated and keeping your balance

Working from home can have many benefits such as improved **productivity** and work **satisfaction**, however mental health can be compromised if you have difficulties in creating **boundaries** between 'work time' and 'home time'. It is easy to get into the unhealthy habit of working more hours than usual. Being unable to '**switch off from work**', as well as having difficulty staying motivated are common issues.

Create a healthy working from home mindset by:

- Establishing a regular **daily routine** with a regular start time, and finish time, and include breaks for morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea.
- Give your mind cues that help to distinguish between **work mode** and **home mode** by getting changed into work clothes each day.
- **Create a specific place** in your home where you work (avoid your bedroom).
- Set **daily goals** for tasks you wish to accomplish.
- **Stop checking** messages and emails when your workday ends
- **Get changed** out of your work clothes at your scheduled finish time.

Most of all, focus on the **positives!** With the right routine, you can have greater control over your workday, and enjoy the benefits of **reduced distractions** and **reduced stress**.



Tips for Insomnia and sleep problems

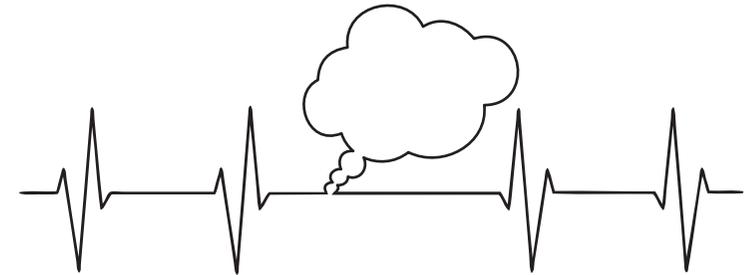
Studies show that working from home can **interfere with sleep**, especially for people who find it difficult to **switch off** from work.

It is important to go outside to **get natural light**, especially in the first half of the day, and aim for a minimum 30 minutes. Keep a consistent sleep schedule and stick with it to keep your **circadian rhythm** (your body's day/night clock) healthy.

Some other important tips include:

- **Avoid working in your bedroom** if possible. It will then become associated with being alert, awake and switched on.
- **Schedule exercise** into your daily routine – active people sleep better.
- **Avoid all screens** 60 minutes before you plan to go to sleep and dim the lights down.
- **Avoid smoking or eating** late at night.
- **Reduce alcohol intake** in the evening and aim for a few alcohol-free days each week.
- Do **something relaxing** before going to bed such as a mindfulness or relaxation exercise.

Most importantly, try not to spend too much time in bed **trying to fall asleep**. This can actually worsen insomnia. If you **can't fall asleep** within 30 minutes, get up and do a **relaxing activity** and then try again.



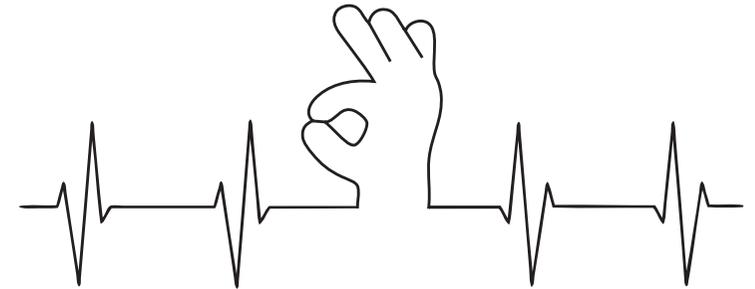
Thinking well to feel great!

Working from home has **unique challenges**, and common feelings that people working from home experience include **anxiety, worry, loneliness, and sadness**. It is important to stay connected with others when you are working from home (both professionally and socially) as **social interaction reduces stress levels**, helps you feel **less isolated**, and **increases productivity**.

Try these ideas to enhance well-being:

- Fill up your **'positive feedback bank account'**. Write down at the end of each day 3 positive statements about what you achieved or did well that day. We all need to hear praise.
- Schedule **regular virtual or phone meetings** with your family and friends as well as work colleagues to reduce isolation.
- **Plan activities** to look forward to at the end of the day
- When feeling anxious **limit unhelpful media** and internet scrolling. Actively search out one positive news story each day.
- If you have worrying thoughts, try scheduling a 15 minute **'worry time each day'**
- Engage **good stress reduction strategies** such as mindfulness or progressive muscle relaxation

Most of all, **practice self-compassion**. Self-talk full of criticism brings us down and a small amount of kindness towards yourself will go a long way. Speak to yourself the way that you would speak to others.



Relax and unwind after working from home

Relaxation techniques have been proven to be exceptionally **good for your physical health**. Relaxation helps to lower your blood pressure, release tension from stiff muscles, lower fatigue, boost confidence, reduce reduce the activity of stress hormones such as cortisol, as well as maintain normal blood sugar levels.

- **Create a retreat space** in your home which is purely for the purpose of relaxation.
- Try a **1- minute slow breathing** technique.
- Engage your **sense of smell**; use a diffuser or essential oils or burn a candle with a pleasing scent
- Tune into your body with a **mental body scan**. Get comfortable, close your eyes, and start from the head and work down. Notice any areas of tension, and as you breath out, **imagine the tension evaporating** out your body.
- Do **Progressive Muscle Relaxation** (many scripts and audio are available on the internet)
- **Bring yourself into the present** so that you do not dwell on either the past or the future. Mindfulness apps are readily available and easy to navigate.
- Two of the more **popular mindfulness and meditation apps** are Smiling Mind (www.smilingmind.com.au) and Headspace (www.headspace.com). Both provide free introductory courses and meditations.
- Try a **digital detox** in the evenings to help you switch off from work and calm the senses.

Relaxation techniques do take practice, but the **benefits** are certainly worth it.

