

heartworking from home



An **Inspari Heartwork** guide

INSPIRI

how to stay present & focused

when working from home



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We usually argue that we are work-from-home wizards. However, the present situation presents us with distractions that we are not used to when working remotely from home. Thus, the following have been gathered as examples from Inspari home offices and will hopefully help us all better ride out disruption.

The present situation challenges us – yet in different ways due to family situation, working space at home, etc. There are tons of distractions, less accountability, and less communication than when we are working in the office, but that does not mean that it is impossible. There are lots of ways to keep yourself working effectively from any location, and the tips & tricks from your colleagues below can (hopefully) help you get the most out of your remote work hours.



keep yourself to (regular) work hours

... and communicate those hours of availability to anyone that might need to get in touch with you, and you will be on your way to productive, consistent workdays.

It is tempting to give yourself total flexibility as to when you get started, take breaks, and call it a day. But you are doing yourself a disservice if you do not keep yourself to at least some amount of consistency.

Setting yourself consistent hours keeps you accountable to yourself, to your family or roomies and to your workplace. It makes you more likely to get your work done - both projects and the many new tasks as a result of the covid-19 situation at home - and it makes it easier to get in touch with you.

Here are the important factors to consider when you are setting an “at home work schedule”

- When your customers/family need you to be available
- Communication with your colleagues and customers
- Time of day when you are most productive
- Schedule of spouse (Covid-19 demands more in terms of mixing more working schedules, including the one of children)



This does not mean that we all look into an 8-16 workday. It might be important for you to check your emails each morning, or to be available by phone in the afternoons. You should work at the times of day when you are most productive and/or are most likely to get the most work done, which could presently mean, when it fits partner and/or relatives. Even more important, let your team leader and colleagues know how your schedule looks, in order to help secure that it works.



Just as it is important to work when you say you will, it is important to give yourself time off when you have promised it. Keeping work time and personal time compartmentalized also helps you keep productive while you are at work and reduces stress when you are not at work. In the same way that you schedule your work hours, schedule, communicate, and plan when you will not be available to work. And then hold yourself to that commitment!

Examples from Inspari

It is difficult enough to get work done if you have children at home, but even harder with younger kids like toddlers – and this is the case in many of the home offices. Still, it is not impossible if you have plan ahead and have some flexibility. We grant full flexibility, you plan accordingly and set up your home office to fit the best way possible.

So, here are tips from real Inspari parents whom are mastering the work-from-home challenge ;-)

Tip #1

Remove distractions and set a schedule for these distractions. This helps ensure you can focus. If you have kids, prepare for disruptions

Being efficient working from home is all about boundaries. This also means setting boundaries for kids, pets, your spouse and/or roommates. Try to encourage them to leave you alone while you are working so you can stay focused.



Tip #2

Get help, if you can

Social distancing is key, but if you have someone that can help out (e.g. a family member that can stay isolated with you or visit a few hours per day), you will be able to get the most amount of work done. If you co-parent, take turns between watching the kids and working. When you are working, hide in a separate room so your kids do not know you are there.

- Set up some structure for the family to have activities and co-team working with your partner: Instead of trying to force yourself to be productive when you are not, or to relax when your mind is whirling, just go with the flow. Do not feel guilty. You will find yourself more productive and happier.

Tip #3

Mix up your hours

Most of our work allows for us to try to squeeze in work when the toddler is asleep, like early morning, nap times, and at night. It is not ideal, but you will be more productive if you have quiet time to yourself.

- Start early, so that you are up and ready or work evenings when kids are sleeping?
- Prioritize and be present – both at work and with your family. Work hard and take time off – just as hard.
- Set a schedule to let your family know, “I am going to be working from 8 am to noon, then taking a break for lunch.”
- Working in schedules, e.g. 12-16 / 19-23
- 25 minutes effectively, close down 5-10 minutes.

Tip #4

Explain the situation

It is a good idea to talk to your kids about coronavirus, especially older ones who can better understand the impact it will have on your day-to-day life. Let them know that even though mom/dad is at home, you still have work to do.

- No roomies allowed: Try to keep the boundaries friendly and playful, but make sure you stick to them. One fun idea is to make a sign for the door of your office that indicates whether you are working or not.

Tip #5

Introduce new activities

New toys and games that kids have not played with before will keep them entertained longer. Time-consuming projects, like puzzles and Legos are sure to buy you some time.

Tip #6

Other distractions

- Is social media a distraction? Then download a social media blocking tool and set your “work hours”
- Are you hungry? Decide on designated snack times
- Unwashed laundry? Plan to do chores before and after work and decide how much time you will dedicate to these tasks.



set up your at-home office

It might be tempting to work from your couch, easy-chair, or even from your bed, but this could take a huge toll on your productivity. Try to always work from a consistent room, desk, or chair, to tell your brain that it is time for work, not relaxation. You are likely to feel more alert, more confident, and more organized.

Ergonomics

One of the most important things when working from home is to ensure good working postures. Therefore, raise the screen of your laptop or have an external screen that can be adjusted to the right working height (top of the screen at eye height) and an external keyboard and mouse, so that full forearm support can be achieved. If possible, try to vary your work posture e.g. stand up at regular intervals (no height adjustable desk, but phone calls standing or walking will also do).

Also make sure to have enough lighting. If you work in areas that are too dark, it may put unnecessary strain on your eyes. Noise can also be an issue at home (while the kids are possibly home, too) If so, your noise-canceling headphones are a must.

Internal systems setup

- Remote access solutions let us work from home with access to data, applications, and systems, including secured setup at our customers.
- Communication solutions enable anytime, anywhere communication via the internet from any device or location.
- Virtual private network (VPN) technology ensures that our employees are using a secure, encrypted connection at home to access corporate information.



plan your workflow

everyday

One sure-fire way to keep productivity up is to get smart about planning your workday. Before you even start working, make sure you know what your priorities are for the day, how long you think it will take you to get everything done, and what you will work on if you have extra time.

You might find it helpful to take a few minutes before you go to bed to plan for the next day. You may find that you sleep better without the stress of planning in the back of your mind. If you find that planning before bed actually keeps you awake, try making a plan for the day while you eat breakfast or exercise before work.

Examples from Inspari

- Plan more than usual, and also work more pragmatically than at a normal day at the office
- Do the highest priority tasks first
- Plan your day around your own natural cycles – do the hardest work when you have the most energy (or time according to family schedule) throughout the day
- Break up your day: Plan yourself rewards and breaks throughout the day. Make sure you get up from your desk during those breaks, get some fresh air, grab a healthful snack, and talk with another human being if at all possible. All of these activities will help you reset, get your blood flowing, and make sure you are ready to tackle the next chunk of tasks.
- Meal and snack prep: Try planning how you will spend your breaks ahead of time, so you have something to look forward to. Just make sure you decide how long you will spend on a break, so you do not get too distracted.



stay active



transfer your commute
time to intentional rest
time or training time

Great colleagues of ours have suggested that we calculate the amount of time we normally have to commute and transfer that time into training time or our “rest” allowance. This is time for us to detach from our work.

Instead of starting our day off by stressing out about getting somewhere on time, invest that time into either a relaxing ritual that gets you to a calm and clear state of mind, physical activities that are great for your muscles, your heart, your happiness and your overall well-being or invest it into winding down your day so that you do not form a habit of working into the night. This commute time can be a time to set an intentional container for separating work and leisure at home.

Examples from Inspari

- Please join the daily planking activity in your calendar
- Do morning yoga with the kids and friend from their favorite TV shows
- “Walk to work”: Bring the kids and/or your loved one and take a walk, so that you do not just walk from one room to another, but get ready “to leave”
- Do home workouts: If you have a FitnessWorld membership, they add new home videos on a regular basis where you can find inspiration
- If you have a phone call that you do not need to be in front of a computer to take, pick up your Bluetooth headphones and get outside
- Take a short walk or play with the kids outside after or in connection with lunch



tune in to inspiration

mentally and professionally

A great advantage of working from home is that you cannot distract your colleagues. Go ahead and play those pumped-up jams loud and proud, if that is what gets you moving. Or try a more soothing soundtrack, or even by leaving the windows open to let the sounds from outside come in. An audio-book or podcast may also be what you need to keep moving (e.g. Dataklubben). Try a few things to find what works best for you.

The covid-19 crisis is also an opportunity, an opportunity to learn. If we all use this extra time to learn, you, we and your colleagues will be even stronger after the crisis.

Examples from Inspari

- Use the “development window” open for (online) improvement of (technical) competences
- “I will use the time learn even more python and c# to use when building the ultimate Lego battle-bot that can beat my ten year old twin nephew’s robot.”
- Meet up online with colleagues to discuss technology
- Share what you listen to on Yammer or other intranet/internal platform
- Catch up on Dataklubben podcast



stay in the loop

yet still apart

One of the best things about working in an office is the potential for collaboration and socialization. You do not have to lose this just because you are working from home. Try to check in with your colleagues at least a couple of times per day, whether by email, phone or Teams

Make sure you keep up on a personal level as well as a professional level. You can do this without taking a lot of time – just share the things that are most important, and encourage your colleagues to do the same

Examples from Inspari

- Join each other for a virtual lunch for a quick hello
- Adding more people cc keeps us informed
- Communicate more: Call, chat, post on Yammer etc.
- Use SoMe, including LinkedIn to show that you are alive





dress for success

you make the rules
for dresscode when
out-of-office

Even if you will not be interacting with another person all day, it is important to dress for success, which includes your normal daily routines. This will tell your brain that it is work time, not relaxation time, and that will give you a lot more energy. If you have a hard time motivating yourself to get ready in the morning, try laying out your outfit the night before – just like many families do in order to avoid “incidents” with children not wanting to get dressed in the morning.

Examples from Inspari

- Sweatpants and a T-shirt might be more comfortable to some, but others may feel sleepy, or unmotivated in them. In sum, here you decide what feels best for you
- It is a good opportunity to give a new outfit a test drive – risk free!



be your own happy helper

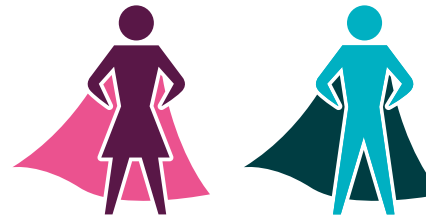
fight the urge to multitask

This may seem like a convenient time to catch up on chores around the house, but it is easier than you would expect to get distracted. Unlike in the office, you do not have a janitor to clean up after you, which means you have to do it yourself.

Keeping your home office clean helps you stay focused, get organized, and be productive. Even if you are someone who is not bothered by a messy desk, keeping some semblance of order helps ensure that nothing important falls through the cracks.

However, this tip goes beyond just keeping your home office clean. Having a messy home could inspire you to procrastinate on work tasks in favor of cleaning – which is bad news for your efficiency.

Setting yourself a weekly cleaning schedule can help you keep on top of cleaning your home, so you do not get tempted to clean during your set work hours. That being said cleaning is one important factor in keeping virus away!



Examples from Inspari

- Schedule regular tidying of your home office!
- Now is not the time to straighten up or start a load of laundry. There is nothing wrong with taking a little break, but do not let chores distract you from being productive. You would not be doing them if you were at work.
- Meal prep: If you meal prep ahead of time on regular workdays, do the same now, so you do not get preoccupied in the kitchen.
- Save watching your favourite Series for off-work time: Try not to leave the TV on, even if it is just for background noise. If needed to keep the children occupied, then of course it could also be your best friend ;-)

