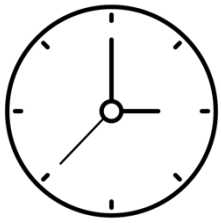
HARVARD
Human Resources
CENTER FOR WORKPLACE DEVELOPMENT

Working Remotely: The Basics

Created by Mahmure Alp from Noun Project

Creating Your Workspace

- Set up your space with comfortable seating or a standing desk
  - Be mindful of ergonomics
- Provide ample light
- Limit distractions to ensure productivity
  - Post friendly 'Do Not Disturb' signs when needed
- Keep a supply of notebook paper, pens, pencils, paper clips, etc.
- Learn how to use Harvard-provided video conferencing and chat tools (MS Teams, Zoom) and wear earbuds or a headset with a built-in microphone (ask your manager for one if needed)


Created by Mohamed Mbarki from Noun Project

Managing your workday

- Begin your workday at your normal start time
  - Try to replicate your morning routine
  - Get internet and Harvard tools (VPN, email, Teams, etc.) up and running
  - Consider saying a virtual "good morning" to colleagues to signal that you are now "at work and online"
- Take short, periodic breaks to stay energized throughout the day
  - Try walking, stretching, meditation, or chair yoga
- Eat a healthy lunch and the right amount of snacks
  - Plan lunch in advance and take a break when you eat it
  - Stay hydrated to maintain focus throughout the day

Created by Franc11s from Noun Project

Conference call best practices

- Dial in to meetings five minutes before start time
  - Put frequently used dial-in numbers on speed dial
- Limit background noise by remembering some basics:
  - Let household members know you are beginning a call
  - Mute your phone when listening; unmute it for speaking
  - Remember: typing, coughing, whispering, etc., can be heard!
  - Never put the call on hold – might turn on "hold" music
- Speak up and speak clearly so everyone can hear you
- Stay concise and on topic

Additional important information

- Refer to HARVie's Coronavirus Workplace Policies page for special workplace policies and Remote Work Resources for the COVID-19 emergency

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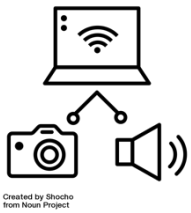
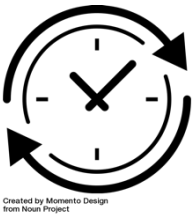
Managing Teams with Flexwork Arrangements: The Basics



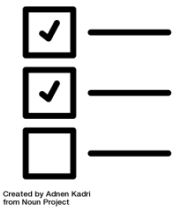
Use communication tools

- Tools like Microsoft Teams, Zoom or other University supported tools give your virtual team an efficient way to communicate when working remotely
- Ensure you and your team have basic skills on using the tools, and take online training on them when time allows



Maintain routines with the team

- Effective routines can anchor the team, putting them at ease, keeping them connected and reducing stress
  - Continue to hold regular team meetings
  - Keep up with one-on-one check-ins
  - Consider identifying a very few well-chosen work priorities for the week to help with focus and to reduce disorientation



Define clear and detailed expectations

- Giving more detailed descriptions of what is expected may be especially important for staff working remotely

Leading virtual meetings by phone or video

- Send out the agenda and any relevant files in advance
- Use Microsoft Team, Zoom, or other University supported tools whenever possible; make it easy for staff to locate relevant files
- Initiate the meeting 10 minutes before the start time to ensure equipment is working and troubleshoot if needed
- Turn on your camera if video conferencing; participants need to see the leader
  - Encourage all to do the same; this increases social connectivity and reduces multitasking
- Keep all participants engaged throughout the meeting
  - Begin with introductions
  - Seek input periodically
  - Pause often to give those who can't be seen a chance to enter the conversation
- Summarize decisions and action items