



Working from home tips - sharing from our team to yours

We asked employees across our AXA Commercial team to send in suggestions about what's helping them adjust to working productively from home.

We received over a hundred, which we want to share from our team to yours. These include plenty of useful practical hints and tips, which we've grouped under 5 common themes:

- **Looking after yourself**
- **Giving yourself structure**
- **Making the most of your work environment**
- **Keeping in touch**
- **Working around loved ones**



Looking after yourself

1. Take regular screen breaks (this was our most popular tip).
2. Find time for fresh air. Maybe get out to the garden or a local park to make the occasional call.
3. Make sure you take a proper lunch break and don't eat it back at your home work station.
4. Exercise regularly, here's some of popular tips from our teams:
 - » Carve out at least 40 minutes each day to go for a walk/jog (maybe during your lunch break).
 - » If you can't get out, do a home workout – a fun way to start the day with children too.
 - » Stop working every couple of hours for a short burst of exercise (you can do a lot of push ups in a minute!)
 - » Set yourself a realistic daily steps target – gadgets like FitBit watches and fitness apps are great for this and some smartphones track your steps anyway.
 - » Stay hydrated, it really makes a difference.
5. Learn a new skill in your spare time to keep your brain active outside of working hours.
6. Make sure you keep some time for yourself too (e.g. headphones on and switch off for a while listening to music or to one of your favourite podcasts).
7. Make a cuppa every so often to get away from your screen and to also stretch your back.
8. Allow yourself the odd snack, healthy if possible, though someone did recommend eating loads of ice cream – everything in moderation, I suppose.
9. Ask for help when you need it, you will have a supportive team just a message or call away – some days will be easier than others.
10. Stay calm, you're doing your best. Remember 'bad news sells' so only rely on trusted media outlets with stories that are fact-checked.



Coronavirus Update

Advice and resources for brokers



Giving yourself structure

1. Keep to a routine or daily agenda (this was our other most popular answer), plan in breaks through the day and log off at a reasonable time.
2. Be disciplined in when to work and, equally as important, when not to work.
3. Get dressed. You may not have to put on your best clothes, but changing from pyjamas helps focus your mind on the work day ahead – you might also be invited to an unplanned video call.
4. Make a list of tasks and goals that you can put a big tick next to as you complete them – very satisfying.
5. Be flexible with your working hours – find a rhythm that works for you and is okay with your team/ manager and also your partner/family.

Making the most of your working environment

1. Try working in different rooms in the house until you find the room that works best.
2. Don't try and work from your bed, you're more productive when upright.
3. Get a comfortable chair with as much back support as possible.
4. Music on quietly in the background helps give a bit of atmosphere.
5. Be flexible and adaptable, working from home shouldn't be a replica of the office.
6. A HDMI port on a smart TV can act as a large monitor or even a second screen.
7. A wireless keyboard and mouse enable a more flexible work station.
8. Make sure you open your windows for fresh air during working hours.
9. If you don't need to be in front of a screen why not make a call from another room, garden or when out taking daily exercise – being away from your workspace can aide focus.
10. Be flexible with your ways of working, it's about the quality outputs, not the inputs.





Keeping in touch

1. Make some time throughout the day to chat with your team about non work-related topics – we all need to invest in maintaining human connections. A quick friendly call to a colleague will brighten up both your days.
2. Use video conferencing where you can, seeing a friendly face makes all the difference. Remember some colleagues may be home alone and dealing with the very different challenges of near total isolation.
3. Plan video chats for socialising too, Friday drinks over video always make for a great end of week celebration.
4. Pick up the phone rather than sending emails – we all need that human connection.
5. Use a WhatsApp group for non-work-related chats with your team, it's a morale booster and plenty of (appropriate) funny CV-19 videos, memes and jokes to lift everyone's mood.

Working around loved ones

1. Keep a timetable of activities for your children to give them some structure through the day and don't feel guilty about needing to go to a different room to work. Explain that the only difference is that for the next couple of weeks you are working from home not the office and that means the commute is shorter!
2. Remember most of your customers and insurer contacts have children, grandchildren and pets that might interrupt calls, they'll understand when it happens as chances are they will be at home too.
3. Download an app called Twinkl for inspirational activity sheets for children of all ages.
4. Look on Facebook and television for different daily activities like:
 - » Chester Zoo feeding the animals live.
 - » Or even Danny Dyer reading history lessons on BBC iPlayer.
5. Pre-warn family members, partners and housemates when you're going on a call.
6. Give your dog a treat or toy to distract them when you need them to be especially quiet.
7. Work in separate rooms from your loved ones if tensions start to run high.
8. Do take some time out of the day to focus on your children, a short time goes a long way – just let your manager know when you're stepping away, and talk to colleagues about how you feel, chances are they are dealing with similar issues.
9. Be adjustable with both your work schedule and personal life, these are challenging times and no one solution works for everyone.
10. Don't be too hard on yourself as you try to balance work and maybe also being a parent, a housemate, an extended family carer, a bread winner, a good friend, a school teacher, a community volunteer, a partner and a counsellor all at once – remember, you're living through history and doing an amazing job!

