



Handling Distractions When Working Remotely

When working in a virtual work environment, it is common to be distracted by the television, phone, household chores or other remote workers/learners. It is important to understand what distracts you and how to handle these distractions to ensure that you remain productive.

When you need to work and you find that you are easily distracted by phone or emails, turn them off.

Dedicate a certain amount of time to focus on the task. Help yourself by turning off the house ringer and allowing your voicemail to answer the call. If you have a deadline and must turn off IM and email notifications, remember to inform your manager or co-workers who may need to reach you that you are not going to be available.

If you are easily distracted by household chores, you might feel the need to clean rather than work.

It might be helpful to do this prior to the start of your work day. Make sure that things are neat and tidy prior to settling down to work. It won't be distracting, because you won't see a visual reminder. Some spillover is expected (like laundry or dishes), but needs to be managed.

If eating becomes a form of distraction, slot lunch and snacks into your schedule.

Frequent eating may be a form of procrastination or a mechanism for dealing with boredom due to the lack of social interaction. With the refrigerator or kitchen a few steps away, it's easy to give into the urge. To avoid this type of distraction, remember to add lunch and breaks into your schedule, so that you are eating at regular intervals. Pack your lunch as you would if you were going to an office. If you can't help snacking, stock up on healthy snacks. If you are looking to take a break, take a quick walk instead; if you are still hungry, then have a snack.

If you give into some distraction, it's okay. Remember to strive for balance.

You'll want to give in to some distractions in the name of taking breaks. When taking lunch, some individuals check the news, websites, read a chapter or two in a novel, or watch a TV show they taped. People do take time off for lunch in the office, and the short pause has the effect of refreshing and recharging. It's also important to determine a realistic end to your workday. When working from home, it's easy to fall into the habit of responding to communication at all hours. Set boundaries for yourself to avoid burnout.