

Effective Tips, Healthy Habits and Strategies for Telecommuting

The following tips are designed to help City of Fremont employees effectively reinvent where they work, while making the most out of the opportunity to telework. Additional helpful tips for staying productive while working from home can be viewed in this article [online](#).

Optimize your workspace

- **Maintain clear boundaries between your work and home spaces.** Ideally, work in a separate room from the rest of your home activities. If a separate space isn't reasonable, look for ways to transition your space between work and personal time.
- **Consider the distractions in the offsite location.** Avoid places where you will be disturbed or interrupted frequently.
- **Consider data privacy and equipment security.** No one should be able to see confidential data on your screen or overhear private calls during your workday. Also, think about whether a laptop will be safe if you need to step away for a moment.

Optimize communication methods and technology

- **Use communications technology whenever appropriate.** Make sure the space behind you and your attire are appropriate for fellow employees to see. Relocate loud animals during important phone calls or video meetings. Let others in the area know you will be on a call, so they don't walk through the area on camera or call out to you unexpectedly from another room. There are countless tools available for keeping in close communication with office mates. A few to try include Microsoft Office Teams, Zoom and/ or Skype. Remember to press mute during group conference or video calls when you are not speaking.
- **Don't multi-task during teleconferences as this can distract you at crucial moments where you may be called upon to participate unexpectedly.** Remember to mute your phone when you are not speaking, so that the clicking of keyboards or a comment to others in your environment doesn't signal that you are not paying attention.
- **Use electronic calendars which offer the option to share appointments and note free and busy times.** They can take some of the mystery out of when you will and won't be available.

Telework Wellness

- **Set up a routine for eating and taking breaks.** You won't have co-workers on hand to provide you reminders to go eat or help you refresh your thinking with a break, so set an alarm on your calendar, clock or a wellness related app instead.
- **Maintain proper nutrition and hydration.** Make sure you have water near your work space and prepare healthy snacks in advance.

- **Take breaks from the computer wherever you are working to prevent eye strain.** A good rule of thumb is to take two 15-minute total breaks from work as well as four five-minute pauses, evenly spread throughout your workday to rest your eyes.
- **Establish a daily habit to transition from work to home** (e.g., change of outfit, shut down computer, step outside) to mentally indicate your workday has ended. Consider adapting habits that worked for you when you work onsite.
- **During these weeks of self-isolation, consider taking yoga classes at home** - Keep your circulation and immune system healthy with free classes at [Youtube Body & Brain TV](#), offered daily at 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday during the month of March as a public service. Look for the “Skip Ad” button to get to the videos, and click "Subscribe" if you want to know when new classes are available.

Staying on target

- **Write down your daily priorities and tasks accomplished**, either in a journal or through regular (usually weekly) emails with your manager and/or colleagues. Identify what needs to get done **each** day and **do your best to accomplish and focus on those tasks**.
- **Create routines to help you resist distractions.** Begin your day with a routine set of actions, such as clearing email, creating a list of key priorities for the day, etc. These actions can help anchor you in your work mode and help shut out distractions.

Managing Relationships with Your Manager and Leadership

- **Be proactive with your manager.** Actively share information on a regular basis and choose to err on the side of over informing.
- **Establish a standard method for updating your manager on your progress.** Include the following in that conversation:
 - ✓ Best method(s) for updates: phone, email, video conference, etc.
 - ✓ Best frequency of updates: daily, twice/week, etc.

Managing Relationships with Colleagues

- **Remember that your teammates are also affected by your telework schedule and how it interacts with their work-life fit.** Encourage mutual feedback on how the team is working together by asking for feedback on your telework.
- **Provide opportunities for remote social interaction.** Structure ways for employees to interact socially while working remotely. (“We’re going to spend the first few minutes catching up with each other – how is everyone doing?”)
- **Provide encouragement and emotional support.** Especially in the abrupt shift to remote work, it is important to acknowledge stress, listen to employees’ anxieties and concerns, and empathize with struggles. Check in with employees regularly (“How is this remote work situation working out for you so far?”)