

The Work from Home GUIDE

*Optimize your schedule,
eliminate daily hassles,
and maximize the benefits
of the work from home
(WFH) lifestyle.*



The WFH Lifestyle is growing in popularity – both employees and employers report increased work satisfaction, enhanced productivity, and improved company morale when a WFH opportunity is made available. Working from home creates flexibility, decreases overhead, and offers a great alternative option to all parties involved.

The WFH Lifestyle has numerous benefits – we've found several key areas that when leveraged properly can greatly enhance the WFH experience. That's why we made this guide.

#WFH

#WFH
Work From Home

STUART
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A B C D

The WFH Mindset

Working from Home is a tremendous opportunity to enhance your overall life. If you are new to working from home, considering working from home, or have been working from home for years – it's important you examine your WFH mindset.



There are a few things you need to consider when working from home:

1. What Is Your Work Schedule?

What are the schedule expectations of both parties involved while working from home? When is the employee required to be available to the employer? Is there schedule flexibility?

WFH can accommodate different work schedules and create flexibility. On the flipside, things can quickly go south if schedule expectations aren't clear from the start.

Question: What is your WFH schedule?

2. Develop Your Routine

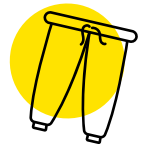
If you're new to the WFH lifestyle you may be tempted to engage in the "roll-out-of-bed" mindset. While this experience can be liberating at first – it can quickly spiral into lack of production and satisfaction.

Treat your work day just like you were required to be in the physical office. Use the time you save on commuting to start something new – read a few pages of a book every day or start a morning walk.

Question: What does your morning routine look like?

3. Dress for Success

Listen -- You will get sick of wearing sweatpants. As great as working in your underwear can sound, at some point you will feel, well... *naked*. You truly can't give a great presentation only dressed from the waist up.



We recommend coming to work "first-date" ready, every day. In simple terms, bring the best version of yourself both physically and mentally each day.

Idea: Buy some new clothes! A new job (or transition to WFH) is the opportunity to overhaul your wardrobe.

Question: How are you showing up for work every day?

**Let's move on to tackling the big challenge
– creating and maintaining your workspace.**



Location, Location Location

If you've got the ideal WFH office set up (think private library with ambient lighting and a window overlooking a calm pond) – you can skip this section.



For those of you struggling to find the right spot or pressed for square footage – we've got some tips to help you get the most out of your space.

1. Create Your Version of the Home Office

It's critical to have a private, quiet space for you to work from. If you've got the space for a home office, take advantage of it. If not, look for a seldom used area of your house that can provide you some serenity. Places that make sense are: guest bedrooms, laundry rooms, or even kid's rooms or nurseries. If you've got a spare closet, try converting it. Having the ability to close the door on your work space at the end of the day creates the separation you need.

2. Not at the kitchen table!

How many times did your mom have to remind you of this growing up? The kitchen table is not the place for anything other than dinner and conversation. While it may seem convenient to just set up your work station at your kitchen table – you should refrain from doing so. Not only does this create the daily hassle of setting up and tearing down your work station. It also infringes on your work/life balance – which is paramount to maintain in the WFH Lifestyle.



3. **Beds are for sleeping and...**

Not for working! Opting for comfort (i.e. the bed or couch) will severely ruin a good thing. Areas of comfort and relaxation should be viewed and respected as holy places of serenity. Infringing on this with work activities will put a huge damper on your ability to separate and unwind. Don't touch these areas until you are done with work; unless you are on break!

4. **Get Creative**

If you've got the entire living area to yourself – create multiple work spaces. Split up your work area by task. Take your work calls in one place (outside if possible, or pacing around the kitchen table.) Do your project work at your desk. Attend meetings from wherever you get the best natural lighting.

5. **Making your house a home**

Home is where the heart is. Honor this by not allowing your work to overrun your home. Keep your workplace tidy just like you would if you worked in an office. Close off your work space when you're done for the day. This creates mental clarity when you leave for the night and will give you a jumpstart in the mornings.

Solving the location conundrum is the most important piece of your WFH Lifestyle. Creating the right space will eliminate a majority of the problems you face. It also helps to create peace between your work and home.



Putting Yourself in the Best Position

By now you've honed in your WFH Mindset and established the proper location(s) from where you will perform your work.



Now, let's talk about some small improvements you can make to increase your productivity.

1. What's *that* sound?

If you are new to working from home, keep your ears open for the new sounds of your workplace. Your neighbor's dog may bark at the mailman every day at the same time. You may be fortunate enough to have construction workers in your neighborhood for a week. Oh, and what about the kids who also live at home? Make an investment in quality headphones that will not only allow you to block out the noise but also have a microphone to help pick up your voice during meetings and phone calls.

2. We Seem to Be Experiencing Technical Difficulties

Thanks to technology we can work from home. You'll quickly discover (if you haven't already) that without technology you *cannot* work from home. The I.T. Department at work will become your best friend. Open this relationship early and even call them preventatively at the beginning so they can check your network connections and strength. This will save you headaches down the road.

3. What Time is Happy Hour?

Working from home allows you to experience working in complete solitude. You'll get lost in deep concentration and be able to tap in to the deepest parts of your working mind.

You'll also get super lonely. Be ready for this by building some connection time into your schedule. Break up your day with lunch dates,

exercise classes, or weekly phone calls/video chats. When you first start working from home it's common to get holed up and not leave the house for days at a time. This self-isolation will build up. Make time to get out and free your mind.

4. But it's not like a "real job"

Consider this your warning – people who don't work from home can't comprehend how you do it. To them it doesn't really mean working. Don't let their lack of understanding infringe on the boundaries you need to set to get the most out of your schedule. Expect to encounter distractions ranging from your mother attempting to call and talk for hours on end, your kids asking you a million questions, and friends asking you to hang out on their days off. Also, your laundry can wait.

5. My name is _____ and I'm a workaholic

WFH creates flexibility and efficiency. Sometimes, flexibility can become too much of a good thing. When your work computer is always available, it can be hard to shut it off and be done for the day. You might find yourself just "checking in" more often or firing off a few more late-night e-mails. Set your boundaries and allow your family to hold you to them.

Preventing Neck and Back Pain

Workplace ergonomics are a big deal. You spend more time working than you do any other activity.



This means that however your body is positioned while you are working is the position you spend most of your time in.

1. Make the investment

If you want to prevent neck and back pain while working from home you simply need to make an investment in your office chair. Proper office chairs come with a hefty price tag (and great lumbar support). If you split time working between home and the office, see if you can bring your office chair with you. Some companies may pay for your WFH office set-up. Regardless of your situation, you will be spending a majority of your day in that chair. Trying to save a few dollars here will hurt much more in the long run.

2. Drop those shoulders

The longer you work at a computer, the more likely you are to allow your shoulders to start to rise. This is a natural physical response and results in holding stress between your shoulder blades and up into your neck. Focus on rolling those shoulders backwards and tucking them into your back pockets. This opens up your chest and improves your posture. Hold this position as long as you can until you feel yourself creep forward – then do it again!

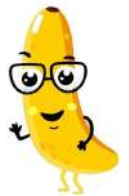
3. Switch it Up

Our best recommendation for working from home (or working anywhere for that matter) is to switch body positions as much as possible. Ideally, changing from a seated to standing position every 20 minutes will prevent any type of posture-related muscle soreness to set in. Like we've mentioned previously, if you can designate certain positions for certain tasks

(i.e. walking around on phone calls vs. doing projects seated) it will help get you in the routine of moving.

4. Don't be a Banana

Towards the end of the day your seated posture will start to resemble that of a banana. Your head and shoulders will begin to fall forward. You'll be tempted to let your legs sprawl out in front of you. This position puts a tremendous amount of tension on your back. All proper ergonomic support you may have been maintaining is lost in a matter of seconds. We can't stress this enough – don't be a banana!



WFH Stretches and Exercise

The following stretches and exercises will help prevent the development of tight muscles and aching neck and back pain.



Perform these routinely throughout the day for best results.

1



UPPER TRAP STRETCH - HAND ON HEAD

Begin by retracting your head back into a chin tuck position. Next, move your head towards one side with the help of hand.

4



RETRACTION / CHIN TUCK

Slowly draw your head back so that your ears line up with your shoulders.

2



LEVATOR SCAPULAE STRETCH - HAND BEHIND BACK AND TOP OF HEAD

Place the arm on the affected side behind your back and use your other hand to draw your head downward and towards the opposite side.

You should be looking towards your opposite pocket of the affected side.

5



SCAPULAR RETRACTIONS

Draw your shoulder blades back and down.

3



SCALENE STRETCH

Place your hands overlapping on your breast bone. Next, tilt your head upwards and away from the affected side until a gentle stretch is felt along the front and side of your neck.

When stretching, you want to hold the stretched position and breathe through it.

While you perform these stretches, allow yourself to take 5 deep belly breaths and focus on slowly increasing the pulling feeling through the area.

Then switch to the other side!

DOUBLE KNEE TO CHEST STRETCH - DKTC

While Lying on your back, hold your knees and gently pull them up towards your chest.



CAT AND CAMEL

While on your hands and knees in a crawl position, raise up your back and arch it towards the ceiling.

Next return to a lowered position and arch your back the opposite direction.



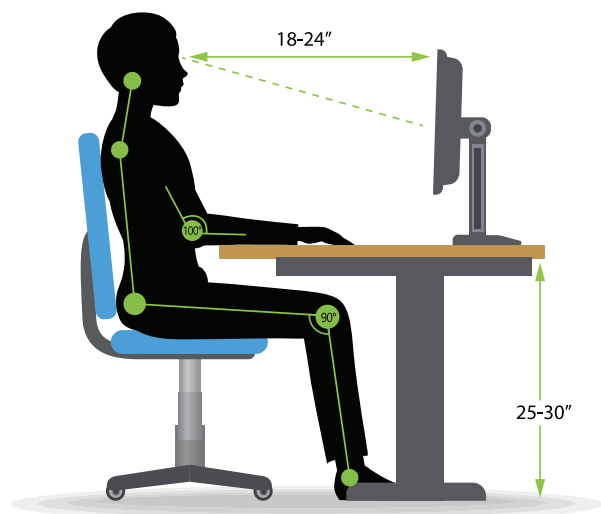
PRAYER STRETCH

While in a crawl position, slowly lower your buttocks towards your feet until a stretch is felt along your back and or buttocks.



Working Ergonomics

The diagrams below show ideal ergonomics for a sitting and standing desk. We also demonstrate some of the features you should look for in an office chair.



Head/Ears directly above shoulders and level

Eyes in direct sight of first typing line, 18-21" away

Shoulders back and relaxed down

Lumbar supported by chair or support for inward curve

Elbows at 90 degrees and supported with arm rests

Wrists supported and in neutral position

Hips and knees at 90 degrees

2 inch space between the knees and chair

Feet flat on floor or foot rest

Keep frequently used desk items within a 2-foot radius

Send us a picture of your work from home set-up to office@stuartchiropractic.com and we'll send you a free gift!

When the Stress Builds Up...

Working from Home is amazing and when done properly can be an incredibly freeing experience. However, stress (both physical and emotional) is a big part of everyday life.



Here's a few things to help relieve it:

1. **Get out!**

We mentioned this earlier – you need to routinely get out of your home. A change of scenery will do wonders in getting you away from the emotional stress of all your responsibilities. You should plan at least one trip per day outside the walls of your living space.

2. **Move it.**

The second you feel physical stress start to creep in to your neck, shoulders, or back – you've got to move. The stretches we showed above are a great start. Don't fight through the stiff feelings and think that it will just "go away." The truth of the matter is those aches and pains is your body signaling to you it's desire to change positions.

3. **Sleep**

Sleep is your body's natural recharge method. You wouldn't go days without charging your phone; don't let your body's battery get down to low levels either. We live in a sleep-deprived world and while getting 8-10 hours of sleep may seem far-fetched it is simply one of the biggest health boosts you can provide yourself.

4. **See a Chiropractor**

Physical and emotional stress when left unchecked can severely dampen your health. In fact, high stress levels are one of the biggest inhibitors of a strong immune system. This means the more stressed you are – the higher your chance of becoming sick.

Being stuck in one position for any period of time put strain on your muscles and spine. This can cause physical shifts in your spine that alters movement, creating nerve irritation, muscle tension, and pain.

Getting adjusted by your chiropractor will not only offset the physical stress placed on your body – it also helps create mental clarity and improves your ability to handle stress. Correcting the misalignments of your spine actually improves your brain's ability to gather information from your environment. This means work projects become clearer, deadlines are less scary, and your productivity will be through the roof!

At **Stuart Chiropractic**, we understand the challenges you face working from home. In fact, we are WFH experts. We've designed our office experience to provide everything you need.

A visit to our office will fit your schedule and budget. We'll help you overcome the daily stress you face and become a destination for you to relax and get away from work.

Check us out online or give us a call at 604.581.3411.

We'll be here when you need us!

