

In working from home we have all had to adjust to a new way of life. For many of us going in to the workplace provided us with routine, security and it ensured we had the opportunity to see people everyday and make social connections. All of which are good for our mental health. Being confined to home, an office, the kitchen or the conservatory and dealing with new methods of communication has taken a lot of people out of their comfort zones. In addition, the pandemic has led to some people experiencing difficulties sleeping or concentrating, anxiety, headaches and much more. It is really important that we talk openly about mental health, not just during the pandemic but also in the future, on day to day basis.

So here are some tips to help you adjust to what could be the new normal for a little while.

Getting in the zone

The drive or commute to work gives you that opportunity to switch your work head on and plan the day ahead, but that's gone for now. So, what do we do now to focus and have a sense of routine? Try reading an article either online or in a professional magazine. There are of course other options such as a short meditation recording, writing your to do list or going for a walk with the dog. These are all activities which you can make regular and which signal to the brain that you are starting work.

Redefining work-life balance

Its all too easy to sit still for in excess of six hours when working from home before you realise you haven't had a break or even spoken to someone. Having a proper lunch break in a different room from where you are working really helps to break up the day, alternatively take the dog for a walk. One suggestion is going for a walk at the end of the day so it still feels a bit like coming home after a day out. **It is really important that you take steps to look after yourself and that you rest.** Ensure that your evenings are time for you to relax. Instead of working you could exercise, watch a movie, read a book or complete a jigsaw.

Getting things done

When you are at work it can often be easier to get your head down and complete a piece of work. It can be a lot harder to concentrate when you are dealing with emails, Microsoft teams calls and mobile calls. Setting some time aside each day where you don't take any calls or read emails can help to give you the concentration time you need.

Talk about your concerns

Its normal to feel a bit worried or scared. These are far from normal times. Remember it is ok to share your concerns with others and doing so may help them too. If you cannot speak to someone you know the Samaritans is available 4 hours a day, 365 days a year. **You can call 116 123 (free from any phone)**