



# How to work from home like a pro.

YOUR WELLNESS GUIDE



# Introduction.

## Wellness

well·ness • wel-nəs

*The quality or state of being in good health especially as an active sought goal.*

Now that we've embraced working from home, many changes were forced into our weekly routines and perhaps as a consequence, we have neglected our physical health slightly. Physical wellness is essential for our bodies because we need to be healthy in order to perform to the best of our ability. Leading a healthy lifestyle increases your quality of life now and in the future.

Healthy body = Healthy mind. When you exercise regularly, your brain releases endorphins and serotonin. These make you feel better, and help you reduce stress, depression as anxiety. It can also improve your sleep and your memory.

Making a conscious effort to prioritise your physical health is an important thing to consider when working from home. Following the rules and tips outlined below will allow you to maximise the opportunities and advantages of working from home.





# Rule 1: Stay active.

Now that we are in an environment where working from home is the new normal, it is easier to lose our fitness routines and break good habits. Working out was part of the routine when we had to leave the house and go into the office, like going for a run before work or stopping by the gym on the way home. No commute also means no incidental exercise—like walking to and from the train station or bus stop.

However, when you work from home those cues disappear and it's easy to fall into bad habits. What does this mean? You spend more time sitting down and less time being active. Our bodies aren't designed to be in the same position for long periods of time. Sitting down working on a desk for long hours can actually cause physical health issues on our bodies.

Working from home should not impose a risk to our health. Staying active doesn't have to be going to the gym everyday or doing intense workouts. Here are some tips to incorporate physical activity into our day to day working schedule.

## **MAKE YOUR WORKSPACE AWKWARD**

It's not essential to dedicate hours of your time to working out. There are many ways that can help you stay active; all you need is a splash of creativity.

In business, you are probably used to finding ways of making things simple, quick and streamlined in order to increase productivity and efficiency as much as possible. When you incorporate this approach into the

home office, it is possible that you'll feel the need to have everything you need for the day right in front of you. This will make you sit for longer periods of time because you can just reach and grab it, whatever it might be.

Making your workspace awkward can help you prompt movement. What I mean by making your workspace "awkward" is simply switching up the physical setup of your home office. Some ideas can be:

- Leave your water glass in the kitchen or another room. This way every time you get thirsty, you will have to get up and get it.
- Put your phone in another room. Only do this if you are able to complete most of your work with your computer and if you only need your phone occasionally.

- If you have more than one bathroom at home, use the bathroom furthest away from your home office. Otherwise, use this cue to stretch out your back before returning to your desk.
- Get as creative as possible and find the best ways in which you can make your working space awkward.

If walking away from your desk seems impossible on those crazy busy days, worry not. Moving at your desk is a great alternative to stretch the muscles and keep the blood flow going. If possible, get a stand up desk. Using a stand up desk is a great way to encourage different postures while working, stimulate blood flow and improve back posture. Whether you sit or stand at your desk, there are also a number of different exercises that can get the blood flowing.

Try some of the following and incorporate them regularly throughout your day:

- Arm wraps
- Shoulder rolls
- Head turns – left to right
- Head tilts – forwards and backwards
- Arm swings / circles
- Calf raises
- Torso twists
- Leg swings – side to side
- Leg lifts
- Go for a walk

Walking is a highly underrated form of exercise. Just 30 minutes of walking a day can improve your cardiovascular fitness, strengthen your bones, reduce excess body fat and boost your muscle power and endurance. Science has shown that placing one foot in front

of another has some very impressive benefits on our physical health.

The best way to fit this into your working schedule is to actually include it into your calendar. Block out 30 minutes a day to go for a walk, or do it at the end of the day as a form of winding down. Walking outdoors is the best option; find a route near your home that makes you feel happy and at peace. It can be a walk on the beach, a park, your nearest golf course (careful with the flying balls) or simply a nice quiet road. If you have a dog, they'll greatly appreciate this activity as well.

Walking will also make you feel happier—a bit of fresh air can have amazing results on your mental state. As a bonus, walking doesn't really require much equipment. Grab your comfiest pair of shoes and off you go!

# Rule 2: Form healthy habits.

*“Your life today is essentially the sum of your habits”.*

James Clear is the author of ‘Atomic Habits’, a highly recommended book that explores how to form good habits, break bad ones and be a bit better every day. Forming healthy habits is crucial to prevent health issues such as diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure or heart disease; not only now, but also in the future.

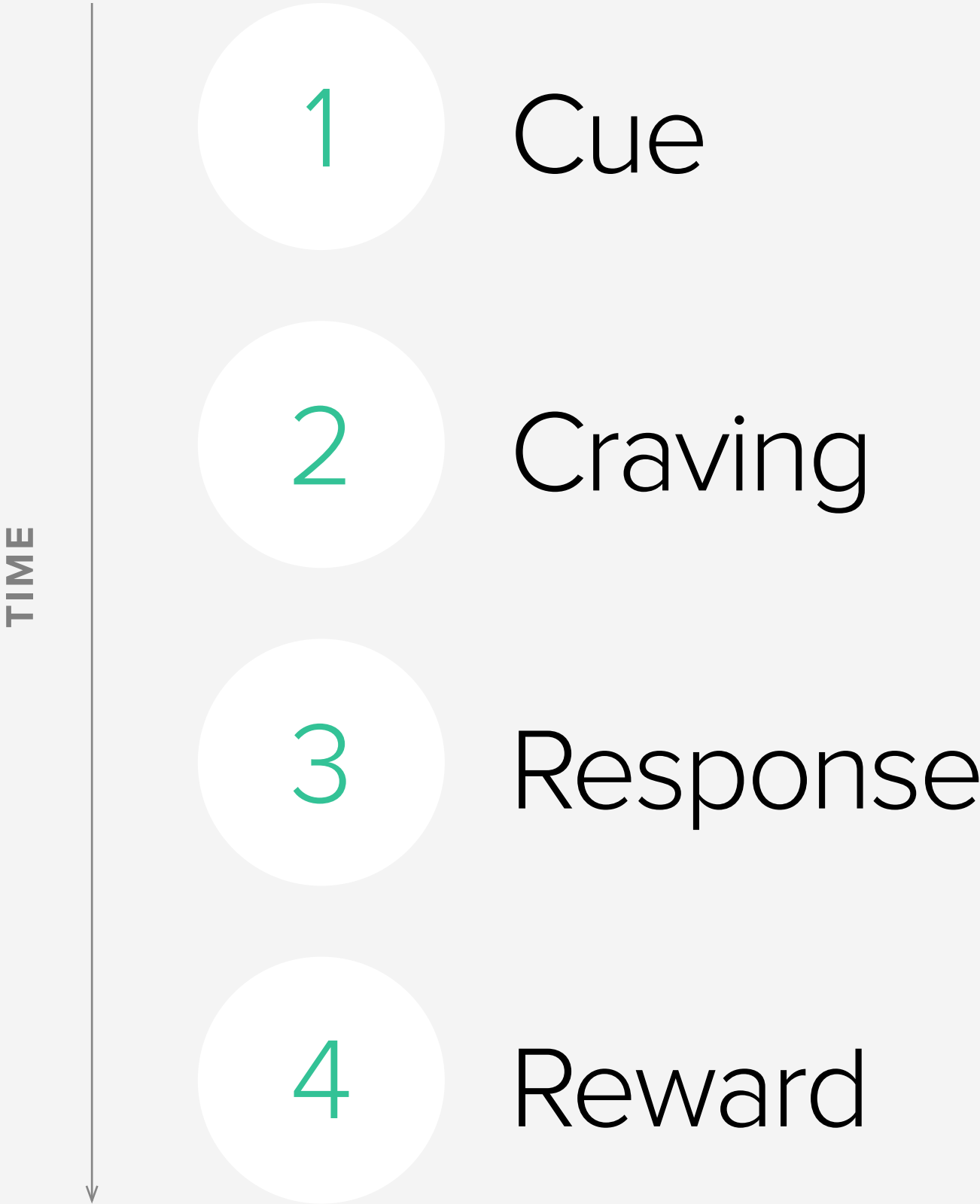
Working from home can make it easier to ignore healthy habits and form bad ones, such as skipping meals, eating junk food or sleeping less due to over working or stress. However, working from home can also facilitate the forming of healthy habits. It is easier to prepare meals from home

than from the office and we save time on the commute which can be re-assigned to an extra hour of sleep or meal prepping.

Going back to James Clear’s book, he explains how habits work. It is important to be aware of this, as it makes it easier to form new ones and get rid of bad ones.

He explains that this four-step pattern is the backbone of every habit we form. As an example of how this works, think about walking down the street past a bakery and catching the smell of a pastry (cue). As a result you begin to crave the pastry (craving), which then leads to buying the pastry and eating it (response). You satisfy the craving of the pastry and now associate walking down the street with buying a pastry (reward).

## THE FOUR STAGES OF HABIT



HOW TO CREATE A GOOD HABIT

The 1st Law (Cue)	Make it obvious
The 2nd Law (Craving)	Make it attractive
The 3rd Law (Response)	Make it easy
The 4th Law (Reward)	Make it satisfying

HOW TO BREAK A BAD HABIT

The 1st Law (Cue)	Make it invisible
The 2nd Law (Craving)	Make it unattractive
The 3rd Law (Response)	Make it difficult
The 4th Law (Reward)	Make it unsatisfying

James Clear explains how these four steps can be transformed into a practical framework to design good habits and eliminate bad ones. He calls it The Four Laws of Behaviour Change. We can see this framework on the left.

Now that we have a basic understanding of how human nature works when it comes to habits, here are three healthy habits that you can start with to help you create a healthier lifestyle while working from home:

EATING CLEAN AND HEALTHY

**Eat well!** You’ve heard it over and over again, and that’s because it works. Good nutrition is vital for a healthy body. This doesn’t mean you have to go hungry or completely empty out your fridge and your pantry. A healthy diet has variety and clean fresh ingredients and now that you are working from home, it’s easier

to eat well without temptation. There’s no need to give up carbs or follow a strict diet; eating healthier starts with small changes. Katie Carter, a holistic nutrition consultant, suggests starting by incorporating these tips into your diet:

**Eat seven to ten servings of fruit and vegetables per day.** Fruits and vegetables are high in vitamins and minerals that are essential for the health of our bodies. They are also delicious and a great low-calorie snack. Swap your sugary and salty snacks for your favourite fruits and vegetables. The variety is endless and scrumptious, and they vary seasonally so you can have fun swapping them up.

**Limit alcohol.** I know this doesn’t sound as fun, however this will have short term as well as long term positive impact on your health. In the short-term cutting down alcohol will lower your blood sugar and lower the potential of headaches and



heartburn. In the long run, your liver will thank you greatly. If this is something that sounds very difficult, try finding motivators such as charities that promote going a month without drinking such as Dry July which is a fundraiser that helps support cancer patients and their families.

**Eat less refined sugar.** Focusing on the benefits this provides is a great way to stay motivated. Sugary foods, while high in energy, will metabolise faster than low GI foods (like whole grains or dairy), leaving you feeling hungry again sooner. The benefits of cutting down refined sugar from your diet include a stable mood and energy levels, healthier teeth, clearer skin, better digestion and a healthier brain function. It is worth it in the long and short term.

If improving your diet seems like too much of a challenge, think of the benefits a healthy diet can have on your life in the

short term. More energy, better skin, better focus and stronger immunity are just some of the benefits you'll notice straight away. Remember that there's no need to do anything drastic. Small steps have proven to achieve sustainable change. Taking small steps towards a healthier lifestyle today will bring big rewards tomorrow.

## **STICKING TO A ROUTINE**

Create a schedule everyday and stick to it. The working environment has shifted and, as we've seen, it has become essential for businesses across the world to adapt and adopt new practices and tools. With today's technology, we are equipped to stay connected and involved remotely at all times. This change has created tension, making it somewhat difficult to

maintain a balance between life and work. People are working longer days and are finding it more difficult to walk away from work. It is easy to feel pressured into over performing and this can lead to a negative impact on your physical wellbeing.

It is important that you have realistic expectations of yourself and others when it comes to workload. It is very easy to bite off more than you can chew. To avoid this, try planning out your calendar in advance and make sure you have allocated time for regular short breaks (5 minutes) to stretch a bit or unwind for a second. Don't forget to make time for some exercise. This can either be at the beginning, the middle or the end of your day. Find what works best for you and add it to your calendar.

Make sure that you make your calendar public so that your colleagues know that you've blocked out some time

throughout the day to prioritise your physical wellbeing. This will let them know not to bother you at this time and it might also work as inspiration for their own schedules. There is no shame in taking care of yourself and as a bonus, you'll also notice an improvement in your focus and productivity!

## **SLEEP TIGHT**

Getting the right amount of quality sleep is crucial for a productive day of work. During sleep, your body resets, regenerates and produces hormones essential for many physiological processes. While you sleep, your brain is busy organizing your long-term memories, processing all the new information and repairing and renewing cells and tissue throughout the body.

The average human needs between 6 to 8 hours of sleep every night, but most of us don't get as much as we need. This is very very bad for your health. Sleep deprivation compromises your immune system, and can lead to hormone imbalance, exhaustion and mood swings.

Working a stressful job can lead to sleeping less—we have all been there. Tight deadlines, stress, pressure... They all intrude our beauty sleep. However, getting a good night's sleep is an important step in creating healthy habits. Here are some things you can do to make sure you are making the most out of your night night time:

**Include your night time routine into your daily schedule.** Set a sleep time and a wake up time that allows you to get 6 to 8 hours shut eye.

**Keep your feet warm.** It may sound unusual, but our feet are the most crucial part of the body when it comes to regulating your temperature. So, keeping your feet warm can help you relax easier and feel more comfortable.

**Dim the lights in the evening.** Every evening, not just for romantic dinners. Bright lights around the house will keep your brain alert and energetic.

**Turn off ALL electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.** Leave your phone charging downstairs and get an alarm clock. Try not to switch your electronic devices till the next morning. This will help you detox and unwind for the evening allowing for quality sleep.

**Practice light yoga or meditation.** 10 minutes of meditation can really help you unwind and feel happier about yourself. Relaxing before sleep leads to waking up stress-free the next day. If you are new to meditation you can try guided meditations on Spotify (find a voice that soothes you) or try some free apps such as The Mindfulness App, Headspace or Calm.

**Read a book.** Preferably chose something light-hearted, fictional stories are a great way to escape reality and easy tensions. Try going for a paper back rather than an e-book as we are trying to stay away from electronics and try avoiding thrillers or crime books. Reading to your children before bed can also help make you sleepy.

**Write down your thoughts.** If you are too stressed from work and you find it very difficult to unwind, try writing down your thoughts. Write down your woes and ways in which you can solve them. Put it away and look at it the next morning. This can help you gain perspective and destress about it till the next day.

Sleep is essential for your physical and mental wellbeing. Take care of yourself by doing something that is so natural to the human body: sleep.



# Rule 3: Create the right workspace environment.

Thanks to COVID, we are all too familiar with remote working. It is important that if you are working from home, you have a dedicated working space that allows you to be as productive as possible. Having this dedicated area for work in your home brings a lot of benefits. It will allow you to focus, minimise distractions, help you get in a work mindset and most importantly it'll help you create a healthy work/life balance while working from home.

Here is how to create the best workspace in your home:

**Firstly you'll need a designated location.** If you are lucky enough to have a spare room in your house that acts as a home office, lucky you. But for some, this isn't

the case. Worry not, try finding a nice spot for a desk, preferably not in your bedroom as you want to keep your personal and work life separated. If there isn't room for a desk, any table or space where you can sit comfortably and in an upright position will work.

**Now that you have the designated space, find a comfortable chair that has the right back support.** Make sure it feels right for your back and you aren't slouching. This is crucial as you'll be spending lots of time on it. If you can't get an ergonomic chair, you can create a comfortable chair with some blankets and pillows.





**Next, make sure that you have great lighting.** Ideally try to position yourself in a place where you can get as much natural lighting as possible. But, if this isn't available make sure you still have plenty of light from some light bulbs.

**Organise it.** Always keep your workstation organised and clutter free. This will help you stay focused.

**Make it welcoming.** Create an environment that brings you positive feelings in order to increase productivity. It is your space, so personalise it as you'd like. Bring some green, one or two small plants (try some succulents if you aren't great at keeping them alive). Try a nice, scented candle or essential oils. Beyond adding a nice smell, some scents have proven to be

helpful when working. For example, peppermint can boost your energy and rosemary can help with concentration.

Have some music in the background. This can help boost your mood and provide extra focus and motivation.

**Most importantly don't forget to keep work at work.** Having a dedicated workspace will help you turn off work.

Following these tips and tricks will help you boost your productivity and health when working from home. Get creative and create an environment that fits you and works for you.





# Conclusion.

*“To keep the body in good health is a duty...otherwise we shall not be able to keep the mind strong and clear”.*

– Buddha

It is of utmost importance that you prioritise your physical wellbeing. It is easy to forget about oneself when the hustle and bustle of work lives with you at home. However, it is important to allow our bodies access to optimal health and functioning through physical wellness. You will realise what habits make you feel better, start small and achieve being the bestest self you can be.

Employment Hero would like to extend our appreciation to the 2021 marketing interns who contributed to this publication:

Paola Murga | Macquarie University | 2021





# Looking for an HR solution?

If you're looking for an all one HR and payroll system that can assist with improving communication, Employment Hero can help. Employment Hero can help your team stay engaged, motivated and strategically aligned with our range of features including:

- 1:1s
- Feedback
- OKRs (Objectives and Key Results)
- Paperless onboarding
- Timesheets
- Leave management
- Employee happiness surveys
- Learning management system
- Reward and recognition
- And so much more...

[BOOK A DEMO WITH ONE OF OUR BUSINESS SPECIALISTS TODAY](#)