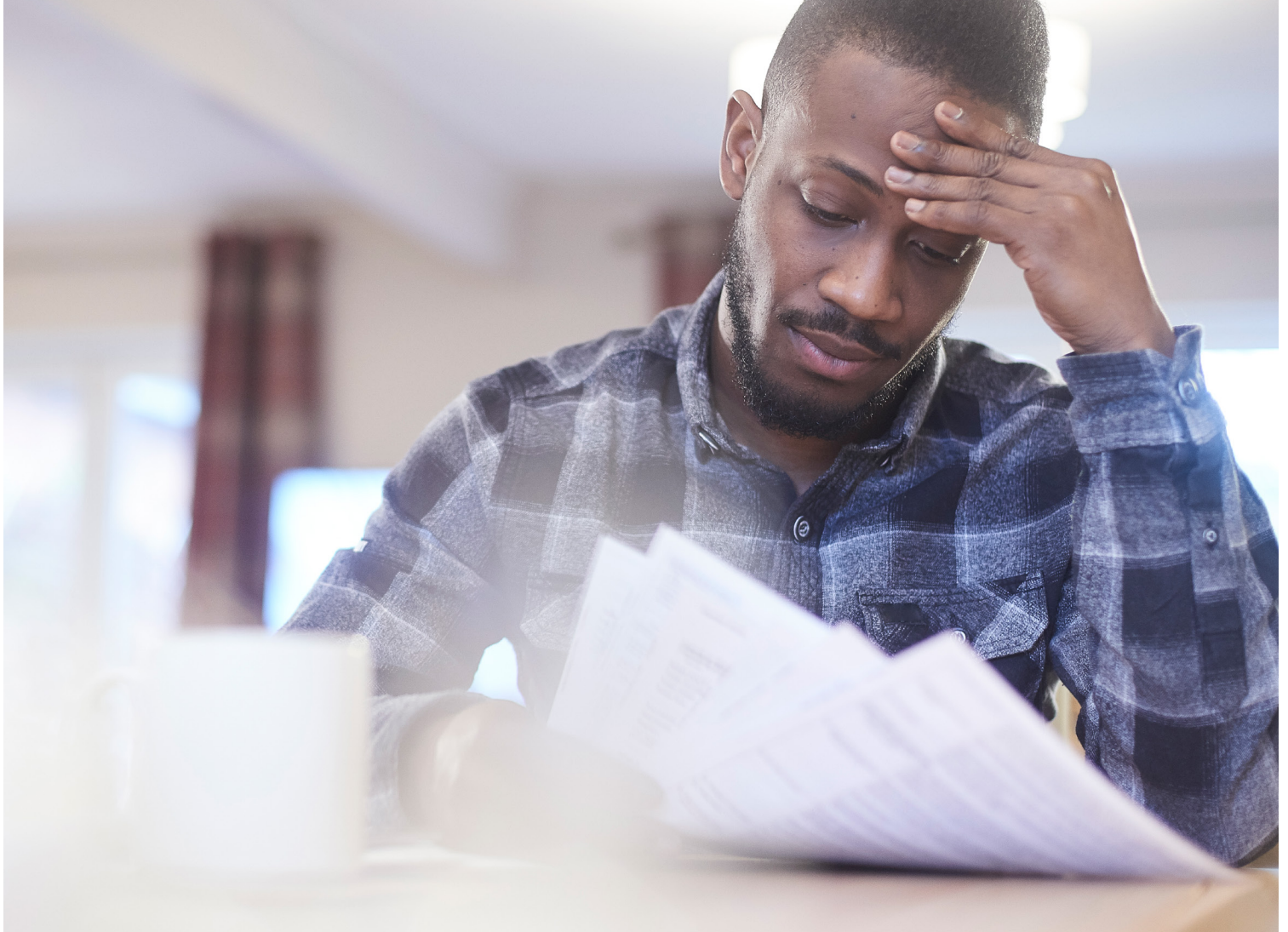


Working From Home

The Good, The Bad, and How to Succeed

Written by **Barbara Staring**, VP, National Account Executive



If you haven't worked out of a home office situation in the past, and being requested to do so now, you may be completely overwhelmed. We are in a global crisis, but we can get through this by being supportive of one another and sharing helpful resources where we can.

This led to the idea of sharing tips and tricks on how to make the transition to a home office a little easier.

The Good:

First off, let's look at some Pro's:

- You avoid stressful commuting traffic and time, providing more "you" time; time to practice morning meditation perhaps.
- You can get your dishes or laundry done as part of your movement breaks.
- You can prepare yourself a nutritious lunch instead of grabbing fast food from the office cafeteria or food court.
- Increase your water intake; increased trips to the bathroom are okay! Nobody's going to see you.
- Forgot to take that meal out of the freezer before you left for work? No longer a problem!
- AND....your dog is SUPER grateful for your walk breaks!

The Bad:

- You might feel isolated.
- Busy households could have distractions.
- You may have difficulty switching from work mode to personal/family mode.
- You might not have an ergonomically friendly workspace causing you discomfort after working for prolonged periods.
- AND...your dog may need therapy after your regular out of the house work routine resumes!

How To Succeed:

So what's the solution?

- Keep feelings of isolation at bay by staying in contact with your co-workers, clients, friends, and family; host videoconference meetings so you can actually see the person/people you are speaking with to feel better connected.
- If you have family members at home with you, establish clear ground rules on what your working hours are and where your working space will be.
- Maintain your regular work schedule. If you typically started work at 8:30 am, continue to start at this time. Get up, shower, and dress before you go to your work area. Don't procrastinate in your pj's getting sucked into the news listening to what the latest number of Covid 19 cases is. Let this go during your working hours. You can't control that right now, other than by staying home, staying safe, and focusing on keeping your businesses running efficiently.
- Take mini hourly stretching breaks; see some helpful videos from the Mayo Clinic below:



[Video: Neck stretches for the workplace](#)

[Video: Forearm stretches for the workplace](#)

[Video: Upper body stretches for the workplace](#)

[Video: Seated stretches for the workplace](#)

[Video: Standing stretches for the workplace](#)

- Set the alarm on your smart phone to go off for a mid-morning 5 minute movement break – go throw that laundry in! Set it again for your lunch break and afternoon break, as well as quitting time.
- If you have family members at home, arrange to meet up on your lunch break time and participate in a virtual fitness class together. There are lots of 20-30 minute classes to choose from on YouTube.
- When the work day is done, leave your area, change into some walking/running/biking clothes and get out for some air, unwind from your day, return to your home in a refreshed mindset.

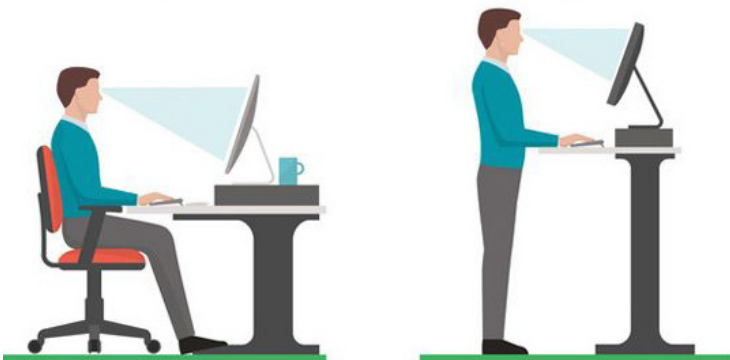
- To make yourself more comfortable, you don't necessarily need to invest in a height-adjustable table or keyboard tray, ergonomic chair, and more; especially given that this may be a temporary situation. You may also not even have the extra space in your home for newly added office furniture. There are many things you likely already have at home that you can use to make your home workspace more comfortable. See the diagrams below demonstrating Bad and Good Office Ergonomics. Then see some simple tips to help you achieve a more comfortable setup with what you have at home:

Figure 1
Bad Office Ergonomics



- Elbows Below Hands
- Slouching Over Keyboard
- Monitor Too Low
- Feet Out of Place

Figure 2
Good Office Ergonomics



- Arms at 90 Degrees
- Monitor Straight Ahead
- Sitting Straight Up
- Feet Flat on the Floor

- Arms at 90 Degrees
- Monitor Straight Ahead
- Standing Straight Up
- Feet Flat on the Floor

Figure 3
Working With Household Items to Create a Good Workspace



Home Office Set-Up Tips:

- Use a good chair (if possible). If you don't have a good chair, add pillows for back/leg support. Or roll up a towel to place behind your lower back for lumbar support.
- Raise your chair (most kitchen tables and desks are too high). Use a pillow as a seat cushion if needed.
- Support your feet on books, a box, step stool, etc., if they don't firmly touch the ground while sitting.
- Raise your monitor using books, old shoe boxes, etc.
- Use an external keyboard and mouse. It is essential that the monitor is separated from the keyboard/mouse. The top of the monitor should be at or slightly below eye level, shoulders relaxed with the elbows around 90 degrees.



About the Author

Barbara Staring is a graduate of the York University/Seneca College, Vocational Rehabilitation Services program. She achieved and maintained her Canadian Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CCRC) certification, and Registered Rehabilitation Professional (RRP) designation for over 10 years. Previous owner of Ontario Rehabilitation Management Inc., which was acquired by a national rehabilitation management company, Barbara now shares her experience and expertise in her VP, National Account Executive role, with a strong focus on the human risk space.

Should you require further assistance or have any questions regarding the tips provided here, please don't hesitate to reach out and we will be happy to connect you with one of our Ergonomists for further consult.

Please continue to be kind and supportive to your colleagues. We are all learning how to adjust and manage these life changes in our own way, given our own unique circumstances. As noted at the beginning of this article, we will get through this! And when we do, I am sure we will appreciate things we didn't even realize we'd miss.