PROS AND CONS OF WORKING FROM HOME

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Editor's Note: Remote sensing specialists Justin Ohlschlager and Scott Voorhees regularly work from home, so Jason Jernigan asked them to share the pros and cons of teleworking. Jason reports that they took to the task with gusto, as you can see below.

COMMUTE

PRO

No commute to work, which decreases the stress and time involved with dealing with traffic and getting ready for work. (It also lowers your carbon footprint.) This enables you to work longer hours during busy projects. It's a lot easier to work overtime when you're not spending 1-2 hours driving every day.

CON

There is a temptation to sleep in longer and not take advantage of the time you've gained by not driving. Some people (psychopaths) also enjoy their commute to work; it's like their warm-up and cool-down. Also, if you are biking into work regularly, then you have to be dedicated to making up this biking time on your own.

ROUTINE

PRO

You can develop a healthier routine. In Scott's case, he gained two hours by not driving to and from work. This means there's more opportunity to exercise, complete chores, read, drink, spend time with family etc.

CON

There's more opportunity to drink and spend time with family. You need to develop and maintain a routine. It's easy to roll out of bed and get straight to work in your pajamas. It's also easy to get distracted by house things.

TIPS FOR MAINTAINING ROUTINE

We try to keep the same morning routine we had when we went to the office every day. Try to wake up around the same time every morning, do some house chores, walk the dogs, go for a run, put on non-PJ clothes, shower, etc. and then head to your desk. This keeps you from feeling like a slob. In Scott's house pajama day is for Friday mornings only!

WORK SPACE

PRO

You can customize a workspace however you want. A dedicated office space (preferably a separate room) is perhaps the most successful element of work-from-home success. Your whole house shouldn't remind you of work. If you have a dedicated room, then you simply close the door at the end of the day and don't go back in there unless it's absolutely necessary. You can eat fish for breakfast and lunch and no one will complain about the smell. You don't have to deal with coworker-invoked conversation jail.

CON

Not everyone has the luxury of a dedicated office for work at home. If your only workspace is the kitchen table or a shared space, then it can create distractions and even tension between family members/house mates.

TIPS FOR SETTING A WORK SPACE

Justin and his wife share an office room in their home and have set up "rules" for work time so they can be respectful of the space, each other, and their jobs. For your workspace, try to also maintain good ergonomics with your chair and desk. If it's not the best, make sure you are standing up and taking a break to stretch out and get the body moving.

COMMUNICATION

PRO

You're forced to utilize all available communication technologies that we have. Our work team is savvy with MS Teams, Outlook, Skype, Remote desktop, GoToMyPC, etc. in order to chat, email, screenshare and connect for meetings.

CON

It's easy to forget sometimes that you're working with a team. IT issues can become exponentially more difficult to work through. You can't simply rely on someone from IT to solve every problem.

TIPS FOR VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION

You need to be a self-starter and work through some stuff on your own. On the other hand, you can't do it all by yourself so an open line of communication with IT staff is crucial. It's a good idea to check in and check out daily with coworkers.... especially your boss. Also, maintaining a consistent set of hours so your coworkers know when they can get in touch helps. This also helps you know when to shut off work mode and turn on home mode.

RANDOM THOUGHTS...

You miss out on the daily teambuilding and social atmosphere that comes naturally from working in an office. If that is the case, try to make it into the office once a week to change up the scenery and get the social interaction you might need. If going into an office is not possible, then heading to a coffee shop (with good wifi) or a co-work space is a great alternative to be around people!

Happy hours are important as well!