

## Harnessing the Power of Productivity Through Telework

How does one keep productive during a forced work from home pandemic? Apparently, for research administrators this is not an issue. In fact, based on our recent national survey more than half are doing more work, and are more productive. For some this increase in perceived productivity is primarily due to fewer drop in visits and less socializing at the water cooler.

Based on the nation-wide survey we conducted, ~92% are currently teleworking due to COVID-19 and of those, 62% have experienced an increase in their volume of work. Research administrators have been able to increase work efficiencies and get things done more quickly while working remotely. Many indicated there were less interruptions while teleworking and had reduced distractions while working outside of the office. Additionally, survey respondents indicated they had more time to dedicate to work thus more productive because they no longer have a work commute.

An interesting result of COVID work from home is the desire to continue to do so. Many research administrators indicated wanting to continue telework or some sort of in-person/telework hybrid after the crisis ends even though many institutions did not allow any telework pre-COVID. There is a desire that this pandemic will alter the work culture on telework in the end, especially when organizations trust the metrics that indicate more work is being done from home.

That is not to say that every respondent felt the same way. A small proportion indicated more interruptions because of new or more, home responsibilities, especially for those with in-home schooling; although, these same indicated no significant drop in productivity. Of course, with increased productivity one may experience more stress and burn out. Here are some suggestions to keep you sane and healthy:

- 1) Make sure to take regular breaks; at least stand and stretch every hour.
- 2) Take time for self-care: include good sleep, exercise, and healthy nutrition.
- 3) Exercise the other half of your brain with hobbies you enjoy.
- 4) Set up work boundaries: do work during typical work hours (unless a crazy deadline is looming).  
If you wouldn't make a trip into the office to get some extra work done, try not to do it at home.

While the majority of research administrators surveyed feel they are more productive, there is also a portion that is struggling during telework and feeling detached. You are not alone. If you are struggling with staying productive, here are some suggestions:

- 1) Create a routine that you can stick to during the day, this keeps consistency in your life and will help you focus.
- 2) Consider time-boxing. Not familiar with this concept? See this article for more background: <https://hbr.org/2018/12/how-timeboxing-works-and-why-it-will-make-you-more-productive>
- 3) If you have the ability, check and respond to emails at set intervals. This will keep you from constantly going back and forth from checking/responding to emails to working on your tasks.

The Research Administration Demonstration series also has an excellent webinar on the challenges of working from home: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A8AZuwooc9B4snDQwi95zX\\_lz2Ut4Frc/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A8AZuwooc9B4snDQwi95zX_lz2Ut4Frc/view)

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