FUNDAMENTALS OF SUCCESSFUL REMOTE WORK

COURSE GUIDE

Why this course:

PRESENTED BY VIRTUALVOCATIONS.COM

This course was created by Virtual Vocations to help new and existing jobseekers and professionals optimize their remote work skills with comprehensive lesson modules containing information that is applicable to your remote work day.

You should be come away from this course with increased confidence in working remotelly, and the following skills -

- A productive home office setup and effective remote work schedule
- An understanding of virtual office etiquette
- Proactive communication strategies for working with management and your co-workers
- Knowledge of how to work securely when you are working from home or a public space

At the conclusion if this course, you will receive access to a course completion digital badge to showcase your knowledge and skills on your resume, portfolio or LinkedIn profile. Let's get started!

Course Guide Contents:

SETTING UP A PRODUCTIVE HOME OFFICE

CREATING A REMOTE WORK SCHEDULE

VIRTUAL OFFICE ETIQUETTE

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH COWORKERS

PROACTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH REMOTE MANAGEMENT

KEEPING SENSITIVE DATA SECURE

*Please Note: This course guide contains only select portions of the full course text and resources.

» **VIEW MODULE ONLINE**

Setting Up A Productive Home Office

MODULE ONE: FINDING A SPACE THAT WORKS FOR YOU

Everything from the height of your chair to the location of your desk and lighting can influence your work, but how do you establish a home office that inspires you to do your best work every day? The first step is to identify where your home office will be located.
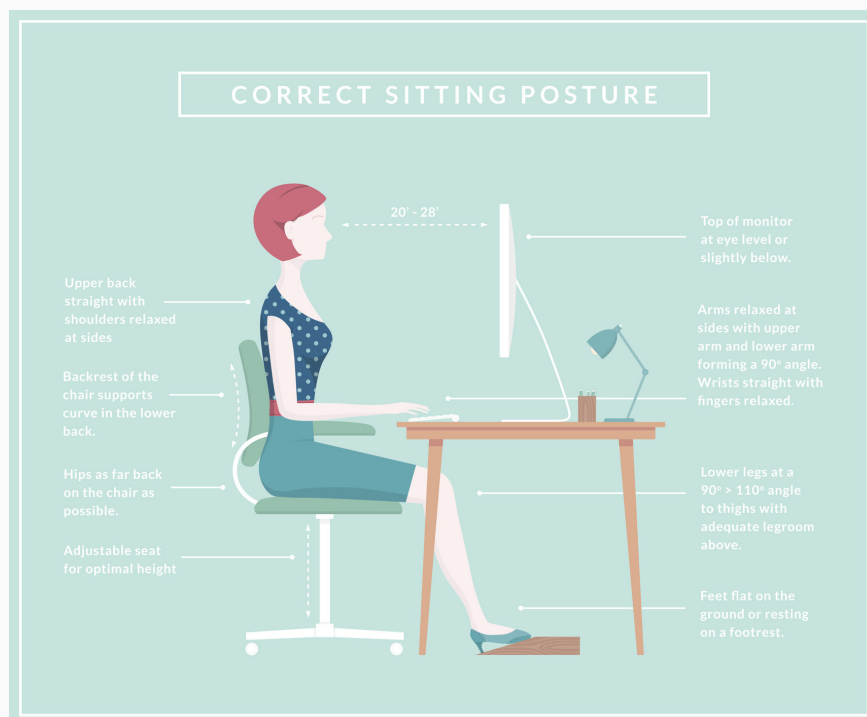
The ideal remote office would be a room in your home that functions solely as a dedicated office, but not many people have the luxury of an entire unused room they can convert to an office.

The next best option would be a sizeable corner nook near a bright window that can be permanently established as your work area. In the tightest of living spaces, you may need to opt for a walk-in closet as your office.
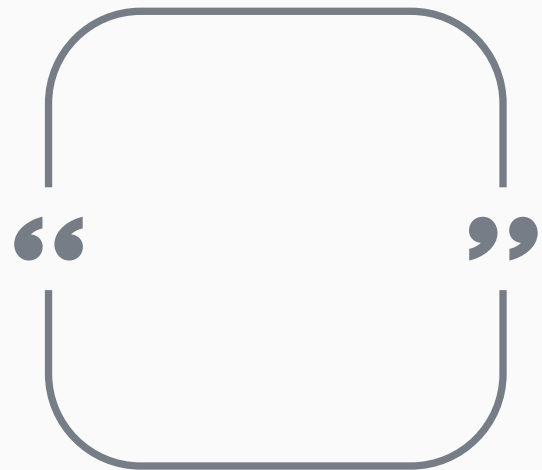
Get creative and consider all possible spaces from the attic to the basement, under the stairs, or even a garden shed!

Avoid using the dining room table, your living room couch or worse yet, your bed, as a work space. Doing so only blurs the already easily blurred line between work and personal life and makes it difficult to end your work day at a set time. Even if you need to set up a foldable desk in your front room window to work from, it is more optimal than using personal space and family furniture for your office.

Once you have identified where your office will be located in your home, it is time to determine if your current equipment is adequate or if you will need to replace items or add a few more.

CORRECT SITTING POSTURE

20' - 28'

Upper back straight with shoulders relaxed at sides

Backrest of the chair supports curve in the lower back.

Hips as far back on the chair as possible.

Adjustable seat for optimal height

Top of monitor at eye level or slightly below.

Arms relaxed at sides with upper arm and lower arm forming a 90° angle. Wrists straight with fingers relaxed.

Lower legs at a 90° > 110° angle to thighs with adequate legroom above.

Feet flat on the ground or resting on a footrest.

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Creating A Remote Work Schedule

MODULE TWO: PLANNING YOUR REMOTE WORK DAY

Remote workers do not always operate on the classic 9-to-5 work schedule. Whether by choice or via the requirements of their remote jobs, some telecommuters may work alternative work schedules like working late or very early in the morning.

Regardless of the type of remote career you have, a structured work schedule is a must for success. Identify synchronous and asynchronous work hours, then use the following types of work listed in this module to create windows of time to complete the various types of tasks.

Synchronous Work: Completing work that must be done in coordination and communication with others at certain times of the work day. Meetings, phone calls and video project collaboration requires working at the same time with coworkers online.

Asynchronous Work: Completing your work during flexible hours and a time that doesn't require communication with team members.

UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF WORK

When creating your daily personal and work schedule, plan your day around the following types of work and activities:

Focused Work: Focused Work refers to tasks that require high degrees of alertness and concentration to execute them accurately and effectively. Examples include creating and editing reports and spreadsheets, writing and editing, planning and strategizing, budgeting, and developing proposals and pitches for clients.

Responsive Work: Answering emails and instant messages, returning phone calls, and adding to project threads in remote communication and collaborative apps, like Slack and Basecamp, are all types of Responsive Work common to remote workers

Collaborative Work: Work done in cooperation with others or work that will directly impact others, such as brainstorming, engaging on social media, and project development, is considered Collaborative Work.

Maintenance Work: Routine tasks related to work and daily life as a professional fall under the Maintenance Work category. Common examples of Maintenance Work include performing virus scans and cybersecurity updates, deleting and organizing files, paying bills, relationship building, and skills building.

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Virtual Office Etiquette

MODULE THREE: VIRTUAL OFFICE BEST PRACTICES

One of the many benefits of remote employment is the freedom to work where you wish. However, whether you work in your home, a co-working space, or a coffee shop, working offsite can present issues when relating to your virtual office employees, co-workers, and managers.

Just like working onsite, you adhere to professional norms and basic office etiquette. Following some rules of courtesy, consideration, and respect can go a long way to ensure productive and harmonious remote working relationships.

While many facets of virtual office etiquette remain similar to onsite workplaces, workers must still recognize borders, boundaries, and courtesies to foster respect and harmonious work relationships. Here are some of the top etiquette tips to employ while working remotely.

When working with experienced professionals in a virtual office, remember that each person has already established their workflow. With the rise of a global workforce and the increased flexibility that remote work offers individual schedules, the odds that your boss or colleagues work in the same time zone, or on the same schedule as you do, have decreased exponentially.

RESPECTING ONLINE BOUNDARIES

WHEN USING COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS:

- Keep your online status updated
- Avoid excessive tagging
- Be mindful of emoji usage
- Respect off-hours
- Batch your updates and requests
- Send timely responses

ONLINE VIDEO MEETING ETIQUETTE:

- Mute microphone when you aren't speaking
- Kill the private chat
- Position your camera correctly
- Don't overdo backgrounds
- Don't multi-task

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Building Relationships with Remote Co-Workers

MODULE FOUR: BUILDING & NURTURING CO-WORKER RELATIONSHIPS

Professionals are happier when they have a friend at work, and the evidence is measurable.

A Gallup report on the correlation between close companionship and overall well-being showed that among the 30% of employees who stated they have a best friend at work, they "are seven times as likely to be engaged in their jobs, are better at engaging customers, produce higher quality work, have higher well-being and are less likely to get injured on the job."

The absence of a close work friend provided a sharp contrast in workplace happiness since "those without a best friend in the workplace have just a 1 in 12 chance of being engaged." In addition to higher levels of work engagement, employees with positive co-worker relationships are less stressed, more satisfied at work, better integrated into their communities, and enjoy enhanced work-life balance.

The benefits of meaningful relationships with remote co-workers also extend to employers. Companies that prioritize and cultivate high-quality company culture and engagement have better employee retention, fewer workplace conflicts, and increased efficiency and productivity.

Human connections are vital at work, especially when that work is performed without the presence of in-person social interactions found in on-site offices. Virgin Pulse and Future Workplace's "Global Work Connectivity" study provided proof of the power of work relationships. In fact, "The more friends you have at work, the longer you will stay with your company," according to the survey findings.

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KEY RELATIONSHIP BUILDING ACTIONS

BUILDING CO-WORKER RELATIONSHIPS:

- Make personal connections
- Respect time zones and cultural differences
- Participate in team-building activities
- Network in social media and career circles
- Build trust by defining and respecting boundaries

NURTURING CO-WORKER RELATIONSHIPS:

- Participate in availability culture
- Remember the little things
- Be mindful of communication methods
- Celebrate achievements peer-to-peer
- Improve your personal writing style

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Proactive Communication with Remote Management

MODULE FIVE: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR REMOTE WORK

External networking is important, but in-house relationships help you succeed in your current position and cultivate opportunities for advancement. The relationship you build with your manager is key.

The more you build this connection, the easier it is to ask questions, gain insight into the company vision, and create a path for possible promotion.

Whether you've been a member of your team for a month or a year, if you don't feel confident in your connection with your manager, you can take steps to improve it.

Networking remotely with your boss can feel uncomfortable, particularly if you have in-office colleagues with more access to the boss. But, even if your company is 100% remote, there can be barriers to effective communication.

INITIATING COMMUNICATION WITH REMOTE MANAGEMENT

INITIATE CHECK-INS:

- Request regular meetings
- Ask engaging questions
- Get personal
- Network in social media and career circles
- Build trust by defining and respecting boundaries

PROACTIVELY UPDATE:

- Provide daily or weekly updates at a minimum
- Be short and succinct
- Use bullet points for specific information and requests for feedback
- Follow-up if you do not receive a response within one business day

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS:
(For inexperienced remote management)

- Send a text if they have not responded online
- Use bullet format in all lists
- Tag additional people on the team
- Call them if something is time sensitive

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Keeping Sensitive Data Secure

MODULE SIX: WORKING REMOTELY AND SECURELY

While similar to the risks encountered as a private citizen, security while working remotely poses unique threats related to your job.

Failure to follow protocols or slacking off in your vigilance can cost your company dearly in terms of reputation, proprietary information, and bottom-line profitability.

With remote work becoming more prevalent, employers are realizing the importance of having security processes in place that employees must follow when accessing sensitive data from home or public coffee shops and coworking centers.

However, some of the most pernicious security problems that lead to data breaches are due to lack of employee knowledge of common techniques used by cyber criminals to gain access to private information.

AVOIDING COMMON DATA SECURITY THREATS

WORKING SECURELY IN PUBLIC PLACES:

- Avoid using public Wi-Fi (shared networks) to access sensitive information
- Keep work data on work devices
- Use Two-Factor Authentication when possible
- Block other's visual access (back to wall)
- Save sensitive work for home or the office

FOLLOW ONLINE SECURITY BEST PRACTICES:

- Know how to recognize phishing emails
- Keep your password secure and strong
- Keep all of your devices updated
- Consider using a VPN (virtual private network) if your company does not have a dedicated network

KNOW YOUR EMPLOYER'S SECURITY POLICY

e last step in working as securely as possible from your home or remote location is to know your employer's security policy and make sure you are following it. You don't want to be liable if you are unaware of any policies in place (because you didn't read them), and a data breach occurs due to negligence.

Your employer should be proactive in providing the policy for you, but make sure you take the time to read them and understand what is required while you are working remotely.

Course Conclusion

WHAT COMES NEXT

Congratulations! You've completed the course, "Fundamentals of Successful Remote Work". You should be coming away from this course with the following skills, resources and information -

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 - An understanding of virtual office etiquette
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Did you know? As a subscriber you'll have access to revisit this course and complete content and downloads anytime you'd like. You can retake this course at any time as long as you are a subscriber to a Virtual Vocations' paid membership plan.

What Comes Next -

For more help and support in your remote career, consider accessing more of the courses available through the Remote Career Center learning area of your Virtual Vocations' account.

Additional Courses Include -

- Optimize Your Resume for Remote Work
- Working from Home Mindfully
- Remote Job Search Strategies for Success

Additional Resources Include -

- Career coaching & webinar videos
- Career guides in top remote Industries
- The Remote Job Search Plan
- Ebooks & Checklists for Remote Work

DIGITAL BADGE

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