



Irish Heart
Foundation

www.irisheart.ie

Well@Home

A guide to keeping well while working from home





We live in a world where many of us work from home. Our workspace might be the kitchen table, we don't spend time commuting and we are working long hours.

While working from home it is essential to look after ourselves physically and mentally. Being active, eating a healthy diet, and minding our mental health are important. This short guide will give you some simple tips to create a health enhancing work environment at home.



Escape Your Chair

Why do we need to move more and sit less?

Getting regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do to improve your overall health. Being physically active can help reduce blood pressure, cholesterol levels and weight which can help to reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke. Regular exercise can also help to boost mood, reduce stress levels, and improve self-esteem.

How much activity should we do?

Adults should be active at a moderate intensity, for at least 30 minutes per day, 5 days per week according to the National Physical Activity Guidelines. At moderate intensity we can feel our heart beating a little faster, we feel a bit warmer and it becomes harder to talk. Muscle strengthening activity should be included 2-3 days per week, like squats, lunges or lifting weights.

What does 'sedentary' mean?

'Sedentary' means any time spent sitting or lying down, using very little energy, while we are awake. This includes time spent sitting at a computer, watching television, driving, etc. Sedentary behaviour has been shown to increase our risk of developing heart disease or stroke. So, even if we achieve the National Physical Activity Guidelines but spend a large amount of time sitting down, we could still be putting our health at risk.

Tips to move more and sit less while you work from home



If you had an active commute before you began working from home, take a short walk during this time, before and after you start work each day.



Schedule activity into your day such as a lunch time or evening walk.



Take a stroll in the garden or local park while on your coffee break.



Stand up while you are on the phone.



Set a reminder to move every hour, you can stretch, stand up, walk around etc.



Schedule meetings for 55 mins rather than one hour to allow you to take a movement break.

Check out www.irishheart.ie for more resources and ideas.



Create Healthy Eating Habits while Working at Home

A healthy balanced diet is one of the most important things you can do to improve your overall health, helping to reduce cholesterol levels, blood pressure, blood sugars and ultimately keep our hearts healthy.

With many people working from home, the usual habits around what and when we eat have changed, whether it is due to having constant access to our fridge or trying to balance home schooling with work. The challenges of working from home can often make us feel less in control of our diets and eating habits.

Tips for creating healthy eating habits while working from home



Plan ahead: Plan in advance when and what you are going to eat.



Take breaks: Enjoy your food at scheduled breaktimes to avoid mindless eating.



If possible, try not to set up your workspace in an area where food is consumed.



Hydrate: It is easy to mistake thirst for hunger meaning you might reach for snacks when your body needs fluid, so keep water next to your workstation or take breaks to hydrate.



Keep snacks out of sight: Keep all foods, with the exception of a fruit bowl out of sight.



Eat any meals/snacks in the place you would usually eat and avoid grazing at your workspace.



Avoid excess alcohol in the evenings: Excess alcohol can have a negative effect on our physical and mental health and leave us feeling tired and dehydrated the next day which can affect the food choices we make.

Check out www.irishheart.ie for more resources and ideas.



Minding your Mental Health while Working from Home

For many, working from home requires adapting to a new way of life. Research has shown that many people have reported the feelings of loneliness, stress, and anxiety. It is completely normal to feel worried and stressed however, it is vitally important to mind your mental health.

Tips for minding your mental health while working from home



Exercise regularly, choosing activities you enjoy.



Get out in the fresh air, exercising in green space has added mental health benefits.



Keep regular sleep routines.



Maintain a healthy balanced diet.



Practice relaxation techniques such as breathing exercises.



Stay connected to friends, family, and colleagues.



Find ways to relax such as reading a book, getting creative or meditating.



Limit the time you spend scrolling through social media and choose a reliable news source.

Check out www.irishheart.ie for more resources and ideas.

Get help

If you are struggling, it's important that you seek help by contacting your GP. A campaign, developed by the Department of Health and HSE, in collaboration with a range of cross-Government partners, offers support and resources to help deal with the stress, anxiety and isolation currently experienced by many in Ireland.

For more information and support please see gov.ie/together and YourMentalHealth.ie.



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