

Health and Well-Being Guide.

Most of us are now in a position where we are either working from home, or at home unable to work. If you do not fall into either of those categories, you are a key worker, someone who is integral in ensuring that society can continue to function, and for that, we are all grateful. It is important that everyone looks after themselves at this time, whether you are at home or having to go to work. This means both your physical and mental health. This is a challenging time for everyone, and it is easy to fall into bad habits, like rarely leaving the house, or lacking human contact. We know it will be hard at times but want to help you avoid some of these pitfalls. Hopefully some of the below might be of support to you all.

How to look after yourself:

- Make the most of your allowed exercise time outside your home. You could go for a run, walk or cycle, it's such a beautiful time of year and there are so many exciting things happening in nature to see right now.
- Try to get outside as much as you can, maybe sit in the garden with your lunch, read a book or listen to the radio in the garden.
- What we are being asked to do is social distancing not emotional distancing. It would be great right now to help as much face to face contact and interaction with other people as you can, while respecting government guidelines. How about one of the many like Facetime, Skype, WhatsApp and Zoom?
- Being at home what we eat can change a lot, for better or worse. Try to eat healthy and keep hydrated, water is so important to our bodies. While we are at home much more it is a great opportunity to try new things. Now you can cook lunches at home, it'll make a nice change from your quick office lunches! While ingredients might be hard to come by at times, it will be beneficial for you both physically and mentally to eat well.
- Do your best to keep a regular sleep pattern.
- If you have any hobbies, make the most of them at this time, you could also share them with others and even join groups online supporting people trying to learn skills you already have.
- If there's anything new you've always wanted to try, e.g foods, hobbies, activities, now is the best time to give them a try. Make the most of your time at home!
- If you live with family or friends, have fun with them. If you have children for example, now is a great time to show them loads of attention, which might not have been possible before due to work.
- If you find yourself with lots of spare time and are not in one of the listed groups of vulnerable people think about your local community. There are support groups in all of our local areas and many ways to volunteer and help others less able than you might be.

Check in with yourself on how you are feeling both mentally and physically each day. If we can be proactive about reaching out if we feel things are becoming a struggle it will really help us all stay well. We are all in this together and if we are feeling isolated and worried so are those we are close to, reaching out to them will help both ourselves but also them. You can call also us at Apex on 01752 825697.

If you are working from home, use all of the information and ideas we suggested to help your overall well-being during this time along with some specifics for home working:

- Structure your day – by having a structure and routine, it will help to make working from home become more normal.
- If possible have a set area for working in, take the time to lay it out so it works for you.
- Plan your days as best you can – this will help you to keep to your routine.
- Have boundaries – have set start, finish and break times, and remember it's okay to say no to things.
- If you are having a tough day let people know, this is a difficult and stressful time for so many reasons. It is normal and it is ok to have "off" days when you need to be kind to yourself. It will happen to us all.
- Book in regular Facetime, Zoom, and Skype calls with your colleagues.
- Dress semi-professionally, don't feel that you need to necessarily wear your usual work attire, but not wearing pyjamas will really help your productivity!
- Take part in social trends on your video calls, use internet trends to keep your online meetings varied: guess the baby competitions, guess who's house the mystery object lives in, include your pets in the meetings etc. We can also make things fun and enjoyable.

We understand that if you've never worked from home before, or even if you have, to work from home for an extended period of time, it can be really tough to acclimatise. The above points are all things that you can do to cope with the change, or even normalise working from home.

If you have been furloughed read through our first page all of the points are relevant to you and your temporary situation with work:

- If you have been furloughed, there are other things that you can do to keep yourself busy.
- Take part in any training opportunities that your company offers, or other courses that you are interested in. There are lots of free courses/webinars that you can take part in to further your knowledge.
- Keep up to date with your industry news and do some research and learning/training around anything that might help you when you go back to work.
- Keep in touch with the people you work with, it's a great way to support each other at this uncertain time of great change. It is always good to hear how other people are coping. Going back to work feeling still in touch with everyone and aware of what has been happening at work while you have been off should really help when you go back to work.
- You will probably have little choice but to spend lots and lots of time with your family or the people you live with. Try to make the most of this time, even though we all know it will be challenging at times.
- Spend time on your hobbies, now is a great chance to focus on other things.
- Take up a new hobby, now is the ideal opportunity to try new things.

Once again, we know that being at home all the time can be difficult, especially while not working, so we will do whatever we can to support you. Again, the Apex number is 01752 825697, get in touch if you need any support or have any questions about the Job Retention Scheme.

If you are a key worker:

If you are a key worker, firstly, thank you - the whole country is very grateful to you for continuing to allow the country to function. We want to support key workers just as much as everyone at home, or on furlough.

- While you will do your best to carry on and do your job there are going to be days where this is harder than normal. These are incredibly difficult times and you have many additional challenges to work with. Be kind to yourself you are doing the best you can in previously unknown circumstances.
- Follow the guidelines given to you by your employer and the government to help keep you and your loved ones safe.
- If you feel overwhelmed at any point, call Apex on 01752 825697.

Re-integration back to work:

- We understand that everyone's experience through this pandemic will be different.
- Some people will go back to work like nothing has happened and will go back to normal.
- It will be more challenging for others, and we will help to put a plan together for your return to work.
- It will be very important to keep an open dialogue with management and other colleagues when approaching your return so you are in the loop with what has been going on at work while you have been on furlough.
- Make sure that you are comfortable with returning to work. If you are not prepared to go back, you won't be able to do your best work.

Other things to consider:

- So many people will have been affected by the coronavirus, whether they have had it, or know people who have had it, or even worse, people who have lost people due to coronavirus. It is really important to respect these people and act in a human way to understand what they have been going through.
- Businesses are going to be doing everything they can to get back on their feet, so anything you can do to support will be greatly appreciated.
- There are lots of people who struggle with mental health, and being stuck inside might be difficult. This is the time to support people who might be struggling.
- This is a horrible situation, particularly for those that suffer from domestic violence. Being stuck at home is possibly the worst thing for these people, so if you notice anyone you know acting differently, reach out and try to support them.
- Some industries, such as hospitality, will be really struggling at the moment, if there is anything you can do, such as buying vouchers etc, it would be really beneficial.
- There are a few industries that are booming having made the best of a bad situation. Delivery companies and care companies, among others have seen a huge increase in business.
- To end on a really positive note, people are learning new skills, flexible working, remote working and how to communicate more effectively, just to name a few. This is likely to revolutionise how we work and how businesses and their leaders can trust their teams to work more effectively.

We appreciate how difficult it is to acclimatise to the current situation, and how to look after yourself both physically and mentally, so Apex are here to support you. Give us a call on 01752 825697 to talk about any issues you're facing, and challenges you are coming up against, or just for a catch up. We will do everything we can to support you through the coming weeks, and hopefully to make it feel as "normal" as possible. Contact us at kevin.miller@apexhr.co.uk, lisa.lynch@apexhr.co.uk, nicola.waters@apexhr.co.uk, or rhys.hackney@apexhr.co.uk. Take care of yourselves!