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Tips for Working From Home

As U.S. governor's plan to reopen their states and medical researchers across the globe scramble to create an effective vaccine or treatment for COVID-19, it's natural to wonder how different our lives might look after the virus is under control.

Chances are, parents will continue accessing online educational resources for their children, and geographically distanced families and friends will continue to gather on Zoom. Businesses will likely spend less time and money traveling to meetings, and medical professionals will still offer telehealth care. But many believe the widest-reaching change will be a greater acceptance of working from home. With that perspective, taking the following steps to improve your work-from-home experience may pay off now and in the future.

First and foremost, **ensure your workspace fits your body**. Your elbows should be close to a 90-degree angle when you're typing, and your wrist should not be hinged. If that's not the case, you may need to raise your chair or lower your keypad with a pull-out tray under your desk. Similarly, your neck shouldn't be bent. If your monitor or laptop is too low, consider risers. If your back hurts, consider a different chair, a lumbar support pillow or an orthopedic seat cushion. A footrest can help if your legs are short.

Next, **establish boundaries**. Keep consistent hours. Let family and friends know you are not available during those times. Protect your free time as well. Stop and stretch every 20 minutes. Take a couple 10-minute breaks during the day and a short walk outside over your lunch hour. Take a sick day if you're not well. And, don't check emails once you're off the clock.

Overcommunicate. Remind coworkers when you're not going to be available. Let your team know when you complete an important task. Make your presence known on conference calls. Since tone is harder to discern in digital communications, err on the positive side. In informal emails, you may want to include an exclamation point or a friendly emoji.

Don't forget to socialize. Interacting with colleagues is important for your career and your emotional well-being. So, join Zoom happy hours and, once it's safe to do so, attend meetings, trainings and conferences in person from time to time.