

Separate work life from home life.

“Believe it or not, a common mistake at-home workers make is working too much,” Fell said. “Without that commute to and from work, it can be hard to break away from your home office and call it a day.”

That’s why it’s critical to set boundaries, experts say. For instance, Fell said, you should arrange for childcare if you’re kids aren’t in school during the day. “Trying to pay attention to your kids and your job at the same time is never a good idea, and both will suffer as a result,” she said.

Angelo Kinicki, a professor of management at Arizona State University’s W.P. Carey School of Business, said it’s essential to impose rules for you and your family members if you’re working from home.

“Establish ‘do not disturb’ guidelines, work hours, break times, and a policy on handling personal matters. For example, no doing dishes or laundry or taking out the trash during work hours,” Kinicki said. “My best advice is to treat your home office as if it were a ‘real’ office located somewhere else.”

Get “ready” for work.

Although it may be tempting to lounge around in your pajamas, experts highly recommend showering and getting dressed as if you were heading to a workplace. As far as attire goes, you probably can get away with shorts and a T-shirt in warmer weather or heavier clothes in colder weather.

Business-casual attire isn’t for every telecommuter, though. Matthew Reischer, CEO of Legal Marketing Pages Corp., finds that wearing a dress shirt and tie enhances his performance when he’s working from home. Reischer said his telework wardrobe sends a message during videoconferences with other remote workers that he’s serious about getting down to business.

Establish “office” hours.

While telecommuting offers lots of flexibility, you’ve still got to stick to a schedule. Debby Carreau, founder and CEO of HR outsourcing firm Inspired HR, said that if you don’t create a window of time for your job, you’ll either work around the clock or put off your work.

Set up the proper environment.

Carve out a space in your home that's your dedicated workspace. Ideally, the space should have a door so that you can shut out noise or interruptions. Your workspace shouldn't be at your kitchen table or in your bedroom, experts say.

"If you work from a messy bedroom or a dirty kitchen, you'll get distracted," said Cathy Caldeira Atkins, who co-owns a PR and marketing agency in Boston but works from her home in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Keep the lines of communication open.

If you're an off-site worker, be sure to check in at least once every half hour by email, online chat, phone or videoconferencing with your on-site managers and coworkers, Fell said.

You also should set up regular face-to-face meetings with managers and coworkers who may or may not be telecommuting. "Like it or not, relationships develop more quickly in person, and remote workers can be forgotten or overlooked for promotions or career development if they are not top of mind," Carreau said.

media networks throughout the day, unless that's a key part of your job.

Reward yourself.

Michael Bremmer, president and CEO of TelecomQuotes.com, recommends paying yourself the money that you'd normally budget for commuting expenses.

"Use it to pay off bills or, better yet, put it toward your house payment. This small amount will add up quickly over time," Bremmer said

Don't go to non-work appointments in the middle of the day.

"I try to make doctor and dentist appointments just as I would in a company office, first thing in the morning, last thing in the day to minimize disruptions of my work," says Linda Stokes, managing partner of the Academy Physicians, a physician recruiting company in the Albuquerque, New Mexico, area.