

KeyContact

News from your local Chambers of Commerce Group Insurance Plan® Advisor

Remotely Healthy

WORKING REMOTELY SEEMS LIKE A GREAT IDEA when you're used to being in the office all the time, dreaming of going home for the evening. But it brings challenges many people don't anticipate. The change in routine can have adverse effects on your physical and mental health.

When you and your employees normally work in an office or with customers on a regular basis, interaction is part of the job. But if for some reason you need to switch to a remote office, it's just you and probably a whole lot of emails, texts and maybe, if you're lucky, some phone or video chats. The isolation can wear you down and lead to feelings of loneliness and anxiety.

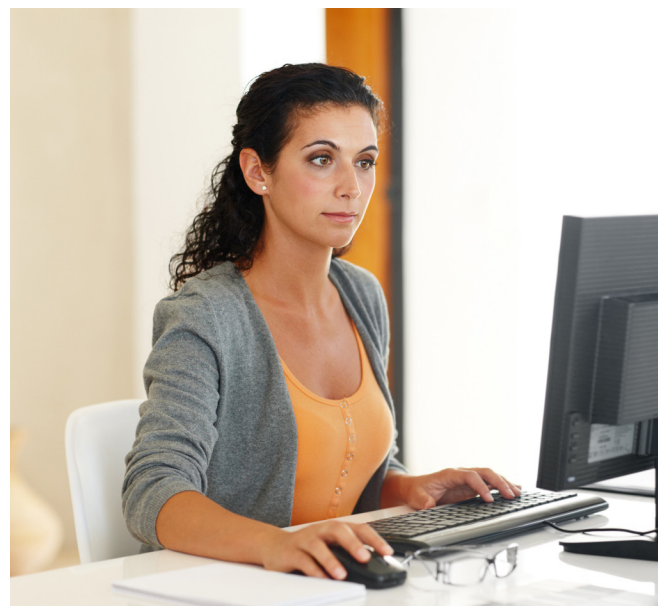
You might start to wonder if you're being productive enough, or if you're putting in too many extra hours. You can become irritable and have trouble concentrating. If any of this sounds familiar, and even if you don't feel this way, the best defense is a good offense.

Build a routine for your remote lifestyle and stick to it. Start and end your day at the same times, and give yourself goals and deadlines, to help you focus and be more productive. When you train yourself to treat your home office as a work environment, you'll be able to draw a clear line between work time and home time, so you'll do better at both.

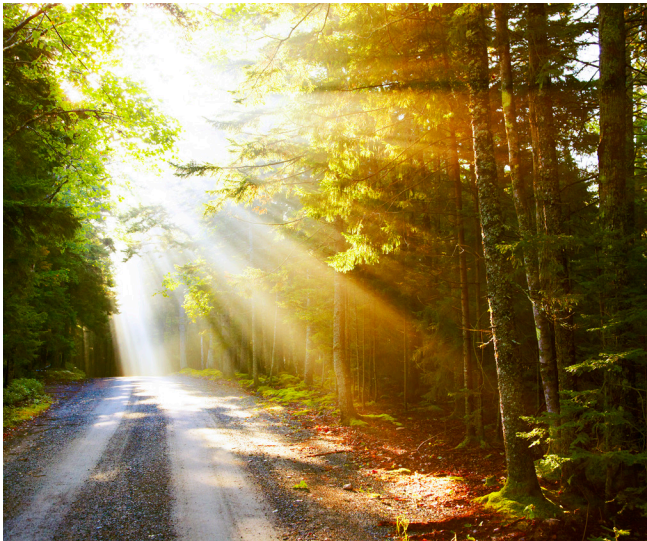
Perhaps most importantly, take time away from the digital devices. Take advantage of working at home to do the healthy things that are hard to do at the office. Exercise is good for the brain and for the body, so spend a few moments being active, getting outside for some fresh air, and/or engaging in a hobby. Resist the unhealthy snacks and reach for the berries, nuts, fruits and vegetables, and drink lots of water. Connect with a friend or colleague; talking to humans outside your home can snap your brain out of the doldrums and sharpen your mind.

And if the challenges do start to weigh on you, which is very common, reach out for help. Chambers Plan's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is just a phone call away, ready to help you and your employees deal with the feelings you're experiencing. They can give you the tools and the guidance to get back on track. Don't have Chambers Plan EAP? Please contact me to discuss how we can add this important benefit to your Plan.

Whether it's a permanent change in your working situation, or a temporary reaction to a crisis, working from home can be a challenge for most people. But if you can take good care of yourself, you'll be able to take care of business, too.



COVID-19 – Looking Ahead



AS WE START TO SEE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE LONG COVID-19 TUNNEL, NOW IS THE TIME TO PLAN FOR WHAT'S AHEAD. Getting back on track won't be like turning on a light switch.

A “second wave” is a resurgence of a virus after a period of few or no new cases. As people return to their normal lives, the risk of COVID-19 beginning to spread again is heightened. The second wave is already hitting countries that have begun to lighten the restrictions. Looking ahead, it's important for businesses to plan for, what experts consider to be, the inevitable second wave of the virus.

Focus on flexibility. There may be a better way to deal with a crisis in the future; this could involve solutions like alternative work arrangements for your employees, supply chain options, and new product and service delivery methods.

Review your communication successes and challenges. Were your employees updated regularly? Were you able to speak with your supply chain? Were your information systems secure and accessible? Did you have access to a business advisor for support?

Be aware of the next wave. Be ready with the supplies you were having trouble finding in the initial crisis, like antiseptic wipes, gloves, masks, and soaps. Make sure you have the necessary stock or materials to conduct your business if there is a delay in shipping. According to the scientific community, it's not the question of IF there will be a second wave of COVID-19, but WHEN it will happen. Keep your finger on the pulse of that development by following a trusted information resource, like Chambers Plan's COVID-19 Business Resource Centre at <https://covid19.chamberplan.ca/>.

Canada has the benefit of comparing public health actions and their ability to “flatten the curve” for the second time from countries that have dealt with their crises in the previous months. Experts say the key to lessening the impact of the second wave is to lessen the physical distancing policies slowly, and to react quickly to any identified community spread of the virus. But most of all, be prepared.