From us to you

How we’re staying safe and well during COVID-19

Workday employees share their experiences, resources, tips and tricks for working from home with our customers and community.
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From us to you is for the hundreds of thousands of Australians who, like us, are now working from home.

First, let’s be clear – we are the lucky ones. While we may be stressed, irritated or bored while socially isolating, those on the frontline of COVID-19 are facing a terrifying and invisible enemy. From the scientists working day and night to find a vaccine to the health workers putting themselves on the line to treat those with the virus – we cannot say thank you enough.

But, just because we’re lucky, doesn’t mean life is all rainbows and puppies.

Frazzled parents are trying to home-school restless kids while meeting their professional obligations. Many people are struggling with massive workloads as companies change direction. Most of us are working from less-than-perfect spaces – with less-than-super Wi-Fi!

At the same time, almost everyone is worried about loved ones who are absent, older or already sick – or partners and friends who’ve lost their jobs. Life as we knew it has gone – and we don’t know when it’s coming back. And that’s a lot to deal with!

To help us support each other, when Workday Australia started working from home, we set up online channels where people could go to check in with others in the same boat. Over the last few weeks, through these channels, we’ve compiled a vast array of advice, resources and cat videos that are helping us keep our heads in the face of today’s strange new challenges.

Those resources are what’s in this book. Ok, not the cat videos! But, the bits and pieces we think everyone could benefit from. Some of it is from official sources. Some of it is stuff Workday told us. Some of it is personal opinion. None of it is comprehensive. These are the just the things we’re all finding useful right now.

We hope you’ll share this book with your colleagues and maybe find at least one thing that keeps you healthy, makes you smile or helps you relax. At the very least, we hope it makes you feel you’re not alone.

Stay safe and well.
The Workday Australia Employees
Looking after yourself

Remember that airline video, “Put on your own oxygen mask before helping others”? Kind of applies here too. You cannot do your work or look after your loved ones unless you are OK.

Focus on your wellbeing

Wellbeing is about more than just physical health...a lot more! As well as washing your hands and following the other guidelines to keep yourself and others healthy, you can improve your wellbeing while working from home by focusing on:

Movement

From controlling weight to improving our mood to boosting immunity, we all know regular exercise is a key component of wellbeing. But how many of us exercise daily? How many of us take 10 minute walk breaks throughout the day, or stretch regularly at our desks? Now you don’t have to commute, working from home is the perfect time to establish exercise as a regular part of your day. Here’s how.

Nutrition

Nutrient-rich foods help both your brain and body stay healthy. Nourishing our bodies has a domino effect; it improves our sleep, mental health, and many other dimensions of physical wellbeing. This is a good time to start cooking from scratch and paying that little bit more attention to what we’re putting in our bodies. Try to: Eat less fat. Eat less sugar. Eat less red meat. Avoid processed foods. Check out a quick guide to healthy eating.

Happiness

What is happiness? While the answer is slightly different for everyone, studies are revealing that happy workers are more productive. We also know that happy workers make for better colleagues – and isolation buddies! If you haven’t seen it yet, be sure to check out this TED Talk from Happiness expert Shawn Achor, called “The Happy Secret to Better Work”. You can also view this Science of Happiness video by Dr. Laurie Santos from Yale University.
Don’t let stress accumulate

We know that stress is bad for us. In addition to exercise, here are our Top 7 stress busters.

1. **Try to unplug.** During a chaotic time like this, the line between informing yourself and obsessing over the news is blurrier than ever. While it’s good to stay informed, it’s also good to unplug to help reduce anxiety. We suggest scheduling “news breaks” at set times, and stopping reading/watching when that time is up.

2. **Practice meditation.** Thousands of studies show mindfulness meditation can improve our mental and physical health. Whether it’s by reducing stress, improving sleep, increasing focus, or improving relationships, research shows mindfulness works. Want to have a go? Check out the Headspace app, which offers hundreds of meditations on everything from stress and anxiety to focus and sleep.

3. **Journal.** Journaling can help boost your presence, mindfulness, memory, and communication skills. Some people really hate this idea, so don’t force yourself. But, for others, it’s a life saver.

4. **Sleep.** It’s important to use proper sleep hygiene to keep your body and brain healthy. Anxiety tends to disrupt our sleep schedule. While getting a good night’s rest can actually increase our ability to deal with stress during the day. Try to get between 7-9 hours of sleep a night.

5. **Practice yoga.** Yoga is an exercise of both the mind and the body – it can help you remain present and in the moment while also offering incredible physical benefits, too. Many yoga studios are now live-streaming yoga classes. You’ll also find free yoga tutorials on YouTube.

6. **Do good where you can.** Giving back to others can help release endorphins and endorphins make you happy. There are many ways you can give back to your community during the coronavirus, without leaving your own home.

7. **Listen to music!** Music has a powerful influence on us. It can calm us down when we’re stressed and energise us when we’re tired. It can move us to laughter and trigger wonderful memories. Check out our Spotify playlist made especially by Workday employees for you to enjoy.

Despite some extra pressure, I’m enjoying setting my alarm clock a little later in the morning. Surprisingly, I think I’m also eating better, cooking more at home. It’s been great to make time for virtual coffee and lunches with remote colleagues. And it turns out, video apps work perfectly fine for Saturday night drinks with the girls!

Kylie McCully, Finance
Proactively support your mental health

Humans like certainty. We’re wired to operate well when we have control, know what’s happening when, and feel prepared. In the wake of a global pandemic where all of those things are compromised, it’s normal to feel anxious, stressed or upset.

In short: it’s okay to not be okay. That said, excessive worrying can affect both our physical and our mental health. So it’s important to do what we can to take care of ourselves.

The Australian Government and the good folks at Mindspot, suggest these practical ways to deal with any anxiety and worry about COVID-19. Share them with your friends and family:

Get organised

A good antidote to stress and worry is to get active and organised. If you’re worried about something, then do something. Make plans and write your list of what you need to buy, organise, or set-up, and get on with doing it.

Balance your thoughts

When we’re stressed, it’s normal to think things like, “How will I cope if I get sick?”, “I can’t deal with this”. But negative thoughts are not always true or helpful - and they may stop you doing things that can help. Challenge your negative thoughts by asking yourself what a friend would say in the same situation, or ask yourself what evidence do you have that you “won’t cope or can’t cope”? Whenever you recognise a negative thought, try to balance it with a realistic thought.

Shut down the noise

Stress is infectious. People tend to talk about things they are worried about. This create lots of ‘noise’, which can create even more stress. Give yourself permission to switch off ‘noise’ such as social media, news, or even radio for most of each day – and excuse yourself from people who are creating stress. Keep checking into reliable news sources once or twice a day, but otherwise, turn down the ‘noise’. Instead, replace it with things that can help you, including listening to music, entertainment, games, or even meditation.

If you or anyone you know needs help:

- **Lifeline**
  13 11 14

- **Kids Helpline**
  1800 551 800

- **Men’s Line Australia**
  1300 789 978

- **Suicide Call Back Service**
  1300 659 467

- **Beyond Blue**
  1300 224 636

- **Headspace**
  1800 650 890

- **ReachOut**
  1800 008 774
Remember who you are

When feeling stressed, remember who you are and what you believe in. Remember to be gentle, kind, and respectful to yourself and to others – who are probably as stressed and worried as you are. By reaching out and supporting others you will not only be helping them, but also doing something that will help you to feel good about yourself.

Keep healthy routines

Our emotional health is strongly affected by regular routines. Routines not only help to get us organised, but give us a sense of achievement and accomplishment. Some of our routines involve other people, who also benefit from them; for example, family mealtimes or online get-togethers with friends. Spend some time thinking about the routines that help you and those around you, and find clever and safe ways to keep up these routines or create new ones.

Stay engaged

Stay connected and engaged with people and activities that are meaningful. Reflect on what these are for you and schedule time in your routine to keep doing them. Talk to family and loved ones, using online forums and chat groups. Remember, right now everyone really appreciates engaging with others, even if this hasn’t been planned.

To be honest I don’t like WFH. But now I’ve got myself into a new routine. I get up (always a good start), do a couple of hours of work, have breaky, take our dog for a walk around my now closed golf course (arrrggghh), do some more work and take regular breaks.

Steven Skinner, Regional Finance Lead
Do the things that you enjoy and that are good for you

When we are stressed we tend to avoid doing things that we normally do, including things that are good for our mental health. Even if we can’t do our regular activities in exactly the same way, it’s important to make time to do things that we find valuable and meaningful and fun. Making a plan to do fun things regularly will give you something to look forward to – another good strategy for staying mentally healthy.

Keep looking forward

It may not feel like it, but things will return to normal. In the meantime, it’s important to have confidence that things will improve, people will recover, and you will get your life back.

We particularly like this last idea. We think that, when we finally step out of our home offices and life returns to something close to normal, the world will be a brighter, more beautiful place than it ever was before.

Because, when things do get better, we will be incredibly grateful for all the things we used to take for granted. Imagine how cool it will be to sit in a café, go to the footy and hug our friends. Imagine the joy in every non-socially-distant step we take in a post-COVID-19 world!
Work-from-home hacks

Once we got over the delight of being able to wear PJ bottoms to work, we realised it’s actually really hard staying productive at home. Here’s what’s working for us:

**Get in the “going to work” mindset.** Get up at the normal time, exercise if you normally go to the gym before work. Dress (top half!) as if you’re going to the office. Eat meals at normal times.

**Identify a work space in your home.** Designate a “dedicated” space that limits distractions from your pets, family and roommates. Set this space up to maximise your productivity by mirroring your desk set up at the office.

**Schedule regular breaks.** Deliberately incorporate breaks into your day. If you’re taking a 10-minute break, don’t sit and play games on your phone, get some fresh air on the balcony or in the garden.

**Take a proper lunch break.** Try not to eat at your desk.

**Make hourly meetings 10-15 minutes shorter.** You can’t do 8 straight hours of video calls. Build in regular breaks between meetings so everyone has a break to stretch, stand up, make a cup of coffee, check their emails or just take a moment to breathe!

**Move around during the day.** It’s easy to limit our movement when working from home. Intentionally get up and walk around your home or neighbourhood during break times to help maintain your energy and your health.

**Stay connected.** It can be easy to feel isolated and disconnected when working from home. Find ways to stay virtually connected and aligned with your team. Use instant messaging to check in and programs like Zoom to hold meetings and collaborate.
What to do after work

Don't let work slide into your evenings. Set a hard stop-work deadline and stick to it. Plan in advance what you’re going to do each evening - catch up with family and friends, meditate, kick back with some entertainment - so you have something to look forward to after work.

Here's what our Workmates are currently watching and listening to:

**What to binge watch**
- Netflix
  - Messiah
  - Narcos
  - Ozark
  - The Good Place
  - Tiger King
- Amazon Prime
  - Hunters
  - Picard
  - The Test
- SBS on Demand
  - Dublin Murders

**What to pod**
- Conversations
- Darknet diaries
- Field Recordings
- Monster: The Zodiac Killer
- Personology
- The Health Hacker
- The Howie Games
- The Paris Review
- WSJ - The Future of technology

Check out our [Spotify playlist](#)

When I am not on work calls, I try and keep music running throughout the day. I've found taking short breaks helps stretch the muscles (particularly after calls) and clear the head. After hours, we've started hosting virtual game nights and have found some fun games to play with family and friends.

Lisa Parslow, Marketing
Workday Team Virtual Drinks
We have a joint, family schedule that we discuss each day. We try to align breaks so we can all have a cup of tea, lunch or an outdoor activity together. It’s been great walking in the park or the surrounding neighbourhoods. Importantly, the schedule includes alone time as well as together time!

Jo-Anne Ruhl,
Sales

Survival kit for working parents

It’s fair to say we’re all finding it a bit challenging working from home with kids in the house. Some of us are lucky enough to have partners who aren’t working and are taking on the burden of child care and home schooling. Don’t forget to frequently say “Thank you!” to these hidden heroes who are making your work life possible!

If you’re like the vast majority of us who are sharing kid responsibilities while also trying to work full-time, here’s what we’ve learnt...

1. **Be flexible.** Working parents often develop routines around our traditional office work hours, that transition to and from family time. You may need to re-evaluate working and family hours, be flexible and draw up new plans based on your work style and parenting style.

2. **Make a plan.** Aim for a balanced work and childcare schedule that you, your partner and your children can try. And then adapt and change if it doesn’t work. Try to be realistic and understand what you may have to give up.

3. **Communicate your plan.** Try to communicate your plan with colleagues, see if they are supportive and can help and vice versa. Be honest about what you think will and won’t work, usually your colleagues are a great source of suggestions and help.

4. **Create a dedicated work space.** A dedicated work space can reduce the stress and anxiety about working from home. Perhaps try a physical barrier if you don’t have a room with a closing door. Get all the tech and tools you need to be both ergonomic and productive.

5. **Interact with your community.** You will need stimulation and connection with people other than your partner and children. Try to stay connected with friends and other family. Perhaps distant grandparents can read books to the little ones over FaceTime, Zoom or other web conference apps. Perhaps a “quarantini” with your friends or a virtual coffee. Whatever works for you and your community.
6. **Look after yourself.** Try to not be too critical or judgemental of yourself. This is a new world, and no-one has navigated this yet. Be proud of doing the best you can with what you have. Be patient with yourself. Add in wellbeing routines, exercise, good nutrition and good sleep. Try not to worry about too much screen time, homework or unsupervised school work with kids.

   We also love these [tips and tricks on working from home with kids](#) from our friends at Atlassian.

7. **How to talk to your kids about COVID-19.** Children of all ages may be feeling anxious about current conditions, changing schedules and schooling from home. They might find it difficult to understand what they are seeing online or on TV – or hearing from other people – so they can be particularly vulnerable to feelings of anxiety, stress and sadness. But having an open, supportive discussion with your children can help them understand, cope and even make a positive contribution for others. Here are Unicef Australia’s [8 Tips for talking to your children](#).

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**When you just need 30 minutes of peace and quiet...**

**Send them on a virtual outing. These are our favourite zoos, art galleries and museums:**

- British Museum
- National Museum of Modern and Contemporary art, Korea
- Van Gogh Museum
- NASA Langley Research Centre
- Science Museum Group
- National Museum Australia
- Taronga Zoo TV

**Sit them down for story time.**

**Use these free audiobooks:**

- Audible Stories

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I’m taking breaks and spending time with my son either going for a walk or bike ride together or practicing lacrosse in the backyard. We have also ordered some science and art project supplies to keep us both entertained and busy.

*Alicia Taylor,*

*Workplace Co-ordinator*
Ideas for employers

Here’s what we did at Workday:

We took early precautions to ensure the safety of the Workday community with:

- Ongoing work from home guidance for all Workday employees.
- All travel discontinued.
- All meetings moved online.

Here’s what we did next to support our employees through the crisis:

Boosted social connections. We ramped up work-from-home, social and wellbeing channels on Slack. We also use Zoom for daily and weekly watercooler chats, virtual team drinks, quarantinies and team cooking sessions.

Delivered care packages. We’re using SnackProud to deliver treats to people working from home. The best thing is, with each snack box purchased, they donate two meals to Ozharvest.

Supported financial wellbeing. Mindful of how precarious some family finances are, we:

- Gave a one-time payment for the majority of employees to help accommodate any unforeseen costs and needs at their discretion.
- Set up a relief fund to help employees who may need additional support and have significant hardships that go above and beyond.

- Expanded carers benefit to help source and pay for back-up childcare providers.
- Expanded our paid sick leave policy for any infected employee.
- Expanded our fitness reimbursement programs, supplementing costs for at-home fitness equipment, fitness trackers and fitness video programs.

Supported emotional wellbeing. In addition to our normal wellbeing program, we:

- Arranged for access to Headspace for all employees for one year.
- Ramped up our Employee Assistance Programs. With confidential assistance and support around the clock, Workmates and their family members can access short-term counselling sessions.

Introduced community initiatives. We all need to pull together to get through the crisis.

- Locally – We are giving employees a platform to set up fundraising campaigns to support residents and small businesses in their area.
- Globally – We are committing to #StopTheSpread pledge and supporting the production and distribution of high-quality ventilators and other supplies at scale.
Where to get accurate & trustworthy information

Don’t fall down the social media rabbit hole. Stick to trustworthy and credible sources. Here’s what we use:

**Social isolation restrictions**
You can stay up to date on the latest national guidelines from the Federal Government and find out about restrictions in your state or territory here:

- [ACT Government Health](#)
- [NSW Government Health](#)
- [Northern Territory Government](#)
- [Queensland government health and wellbeing](#)
- [Government of South Australia SA Health](#)
- [Tasmanian Government Department of Health](#)
- [Victoria State Government Health and Human Services](#)
- [Government of Western Australia Department of Health](#)

**Health advice**
The Department of Health maintains current information on:
- Preventing the disease
- Understanding the symptoms of the virus
- What to do if you think you might have COVID-19

**Health Direct**
Or call the 24/7 National Coronavirus Health Information Line **1800 020 080**

For us, like so many, it’s a balancing act. We do our best to create structure around our work and family. It’s a day-by-day proposition!

Sarah Stubbings, Proposal Management
On behalf of the Workday Community, we are sending heartfelt thanks to all the professionals and volunteers responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Australia and New Zealand, including our customers and their teams working in hospitals, aged care centres, research institutions and volunteering organisations. Thank you. Stay safe.

The purpose of this eBook is to share our experiences of content or services that our employees have found useful. Nothing in this eBook should be considered as a substitute for advice from a qualified health and wellbeing professional. Workday does not have any affiliation or marketing arrangements with any of the third party sites we have linked to and we do not make any representations or warranties about the products, services or content offered on any third party sites to which we have linked.