

How To Increase Home Office Productivity

By Rachel Goldstein

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Working at home is not always as easy as people with "normal" jobs might think. There are hundreds of distractions home workers must struggle against. Whether it's your screaming kids and telemarketers or just the constant hunger pains from knowing the refrigerator is just behind you. Only the most diligent worker will get any work done at all.

So what do freelancers do to stay productive in their home office? They either lock themselves in their rooms chained to a desk or follow a few guidelines.

****Home Office Design** - Home office design should never be overlooked. If you decide to just simply place your computer on the kitchen counter, expect to raid the refrigerator every 15 minutes, wash dishes, mop the floor, and wipe counters. You need to understand that a home and a home office serve different purposes. When you design your home office, try to keep them as distinct as possible.

****Dress For the Occasion** - You have seen this cause and effect before in school children. Dress a child up nice and their behavior changes for the better. If you wear sweatpants and a ripped t-shirt you will feel like just lounging around. Try dressing up in work clothing. Dressing in work clothes creates a professional atmosphere. Plus, would you vegitate on the couch in a dress?

****Create Schedules** - Work from home changes the set 9 to 5 schedule. When you work at home you could easily find yourself working till 2 AM every morning. Your schedule might evolve around family commitments, for example, if your child is young and needs a lot of attention, you might find yourself working around naps. Set milestones for yourself to reach on a daily basis. Establishing your priorities and goals are your responsibility. Setting a schedule for yourself with established goals will provide the framework for a more productive office.

****Family and Friends** - There is nothing more detrimental to your productivity than a friend calling on a regular basis when you are trying to get work done. Family and friends might think that your job is not serious because you work from home. Point out to people who don't understand that you need to keep the lines free for your clients or employer during the day. If they just don't get the hint, let the answering machine pick up and screen your calls or get a second line for business and don't answer your home line while you are working.

****Prioritize Tasks** - Understanding the way that you work is essential if you are going to prioritize

tasks. Find out what motivates you to work harder and what keeps you focused on your work. Reward yourself for completing a project. Take yourself to dinner or treat yourself to a massage.

****Equipment** - Don't let old equipment slow you down. For example, if you are a web designer, the worst thing you could do is buy a 28.8K modem. It is worth the money to buy effective equipment that will save you time. Time is money.

****Take Breaks** - Being trapped in your house all day could drive anyone nuts. Treat yourself to a break at least once a day. Go for a walk, read a book, or take a nap. When you get back from your break feeling refreshed, you will be surprised how much better you work.

If you follow these 7 guidelines, you will most defiantly have a more productive home office. Creating an atmosphere of a business is the most important factor in creating a productive home office. Good Luck!

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