



Essential guide to working from home

Tips and resources to help you set up your workspace,
stay connected, and manage your time and well-being

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While working from home and working remotely may sound similar, the key difference is whether you're leaving your home at the start of the workday. Dig into the differences and see which scenario applies to you.

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Changes in the workplace

The traditional ways of running a workplace—designated office spaces, timed lunch breaks, and strict stop and start times are becoming more relaxed. As the wants and needs of employees change and companies continue to evolve, open concept floor plans, pets in the office, and flexible work arrangements are becoming more and more common.

While working remotely has become more commonplace, it still sometimes involves adjustments if you're used to working in a traditional office environment. There are many ways to set yourself up for success wherever you choose to do your job.

So, for those who are thinking about flexible work arrangements or have already embraced it, this guide is meant to help you stay productive from day one. Learn more about setting up a secure and productive workspace, keeping a daily routine, fixing common Wi-Fi and printer issues, and even ways to keep the kids entertained. We've got you covered.

This is the Essential Guide to Working from Home.



The flexible workplace

Let's begin by clearing up the differences between working from home and working remotely.



Working from home

Working from home, or telecommuting, means you aren't leaving your home to go to a company designated office. Instead, your home is your office—pajama attire optional, though not recommended.



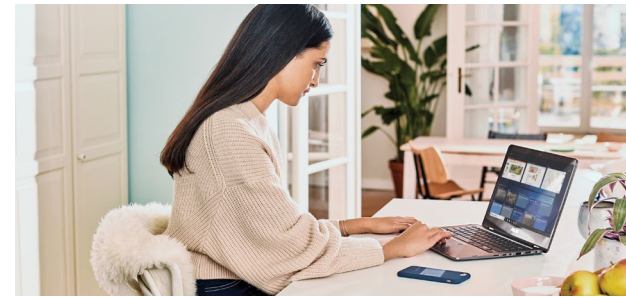
Working remotely

Working remotely can happen anytime, and anywhere. Think: coffee shop, bookstore, or a shared office space. If there's high-speed internet, you're in business. Typically, remote workers also have more flexibility in their schedules without having to adhere to a 9-5 workday.

Set up your workspace

Your physical workspace

Take the time to set up a workspace that is comfortable, secure, and where you can work effectively.



A safe and secure space

Find a safe space to work—good ventilation, proper lighting, good ergonomics, and comfortable furniture are just a few things to consider.



Increase your desk space

If you have the space and budget for an extra monitor or two, this is a great way to do more work and see it all clearly. Learn how to [connect multiple monitors](#) for maximum display space. Using a laptop? Consider adding an ergonomic keyboard and mouse.



Use your best connection

A secure, password-protected Wi-Fi network or ethernet connection for the home is essential to a productive workspace. When using a wireless connection, consider your distance from the router, which can affect your connection quality.



Personalize your workplace

Decorate your space with family photos or items that bring you comfort and minimize distractions.



Knowing how to troubleshoot is key to a productive work environment. Learn how to tackle common connectivity issues with these articles.

[Set up a secure and efficient Wi-Fi network for the home](#)

[Quick ways to fix common Wi-Fi connection issues](#)

[Troubleshooting tips for Wi-Fi printer issues](#)

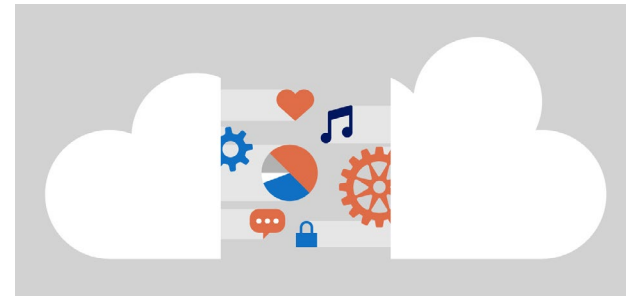
[Troubleshooting tips for USB printer issues](#)

[Get help with Bluetooth issues](#)

Set up your workspace

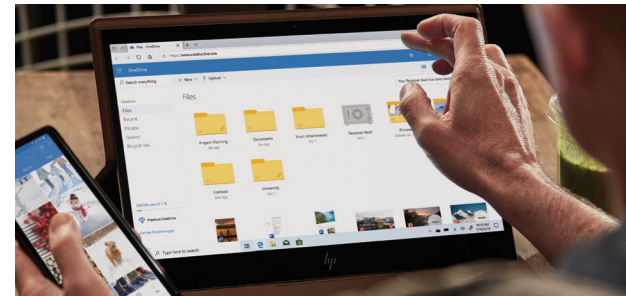
Your virtual workspace

A virtual workspace gives you the ability to collaborate and stay productive online, from nearly anywhere.



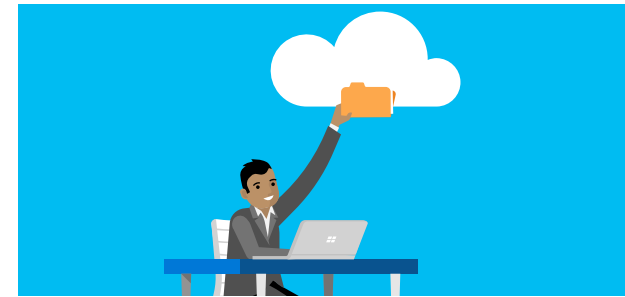
Work in the cloud

Collaborating with colleagues, syncing documents, and backing up files is simple with tools like [OneDrive](#), [OneNote](#), [Power Point](#), [Excel](#), and [Word](#). Make your documents virtual and accessible on the web and across devices.



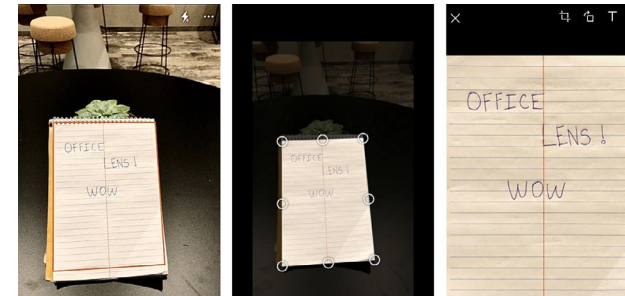
Sync your phone to your computer

Get to your documents, [To-Do lists](#), [Sticky Notes](#), and calendar from your phone with Microsoft Launcher, available in the Google Play store. (For Android phones only)



Back up your documents

Avoid lost work by backing up your documents and data in the cloud and/or to an external drive. Learn how to [back up your files](#) to safeguard your information.



Scanner in your pocket

Scan written notes and physical documents right from your phone using the [Office Lens app](#).



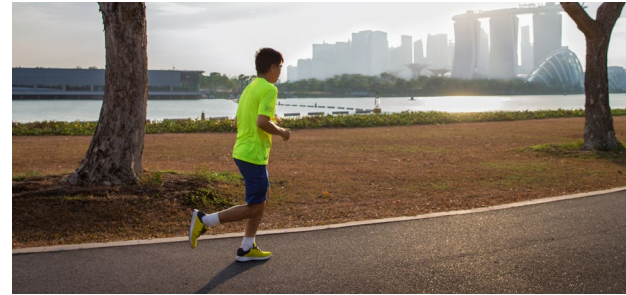
Learn from others or offer your advice.

[Share your tips for staying focused while working from home and remotely.](#)

How to stay focused

Set yourself up for success

Staying focused when working from home can be a challenge. Here are four tips to help you remove distractions and remain productive.



Create a routine

Try waking up at the same time each day. Give yourself time to relax, have breakfast, and get fully dressed. Create a routine that helps you get into a work mindset and try finishing work at the same time each evening.



Block off time

Block off time on your calendar for specific tasks to avoid interruptions. Try [Focus Assist](#). It gives you full control over which notifications get through to you and which get silenced.



Designate a work area

Separate workspace from personal space. If you have an office area with a door, that's ideal. If not, set up a makeshift workspace but try to avoid areas like couches and beds where you spend time relaxing.



Eat healthy

It's easy to snack when you're working from home, especially if you work in your kitchen. Try to develop healthy eating habits. Plan nutritious meals and designate mealtimes.



Filling out a daily schedule, workout log, or a weekly chore sheet can help you stay on track throughout the day.

Browse through Microsoft's [free templates](#) to find a planner to help you stay organized.

How to stay focused

Tips to stay balanced and active

Working from home or remotely can mean a lot of alone time. Here are some quick ideas that can help you make the most of a break and stay connected to others.



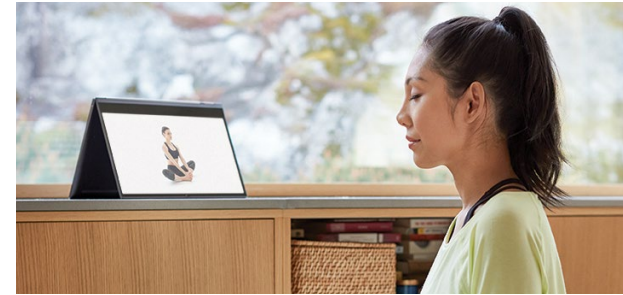
Celebrate your wins

When you cross something off your to-do list, leave your computer for a minute or two. Call a friend or relative. Get water, refill your coffee mug, or go outside. Step away from the computer and celebrate your accomplishments.



Go for a walk

Do you have a call that can be taken on the go? If so, head out for a walk. Breathe in fresh air while getting some work done.



Try meditation

Look into guided meditation apps. Many services offer soundscapes, narrated stories, and sessions on managing stress, sleep, relationships, and more.



Learn a new skill

Interested in learning a new language? Try out a language learning app or head to YouTube where there are tutorials on a variety of topics.



Music to your ears!

The soothing sounds of classical and instrumental music are some of the best genres to listen to while concentrating. Experiment with silence and different music genres to discover what helps you to be the most productive.

[Discover what others are listening to.](#)

How to stay focused

Working from home with kids

If you have children at home, do your best to stay focused while managing a work/life balance. Here are some tips that may come in handy when working from home with kids.



Timing is everything

Try working while your child is sleeping. That may mean getting up earlier than you normally would. If possible, schedule your most important tasks around your child's bedtime and naptime.



Distance learning

A student's learning can happen anywhere. Get to know the tools made to support learners of all ages and abilities, and see how your child's core subjects and class discussions can happen with Office 365. [Distance learning with Office 365: Guidance for parents and guardians](#)



Occupy their minds

See if your child would like to be your helper. Give them a job like organizing office supplies or separating markers and crayons by color.



Family Activities

Keep your family entertained at home with a [collection of activity templates](#) including games, books, puzzles, and more.



Learn together

Engage your family with safe and simple, family-led learning experiences for ages 3-12. This collection of free activities, curated out of educational resources from around the world, encourages families to Learn, Do, and Share.

Check out these activities by age

[3-6 year old activities](#)—

Learn family history, build a dinosaur, have a dance party, and more!

[6-9 year old activities](#)—

Stop motion animation, make summer plans, learn about planets, and more!

[9-12 year old activities](#)—

Learn about AI, write a news story, meet an artist, and more!

[Visit the Family Learning Center](#) for more fun activities and building learning schedules.

Flexible working

Set up your remote work environment

If you decide to make your office outside of your home, here are a few things to keep in mind in order to stay focused, productive and protected.



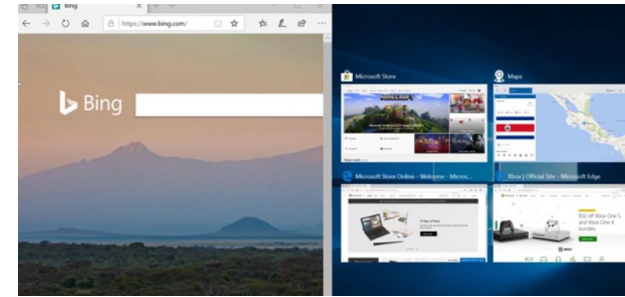
Find the right workspace

A shared space can come with distractions, and headphones can help keep out the background noise. If you'll be taking calls, try to find a quiet corner so everyone on the call can be heard.



Stay safe on public Wi-Fi

[Learn how to stay safe on public Wi-Fi](#) before logging onto any public or free networks like those offered at airports, hotels, coffee shops, restaurants, and bookstores.



Optimize your desk space

If you're working on one device, make the most of your single screen with [Snap Assist](#). This Windows feature allows you to split your screen between two open windows.




Stay secure

Free wi-fi doesn't mean it's secure. Explore more secure options like a Virtual Private Network (VPN) service to ensure your data stays safe. [See more tips for working securely from home.](#)



Don't forget to lock your computer before stepping away.

Press the Windows key  + L to keep your computer secure.

Flexible working

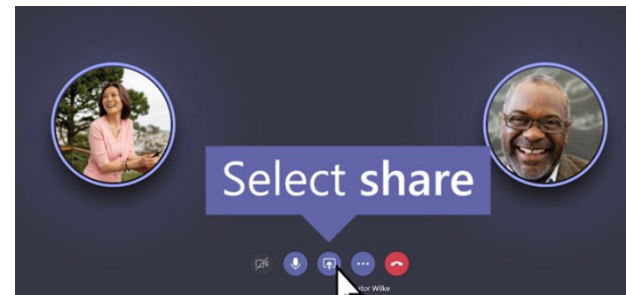
Remote communication with Microsoft Teams

Don't miss a beat by using technology to connect and collaborate from nearly anywhere.



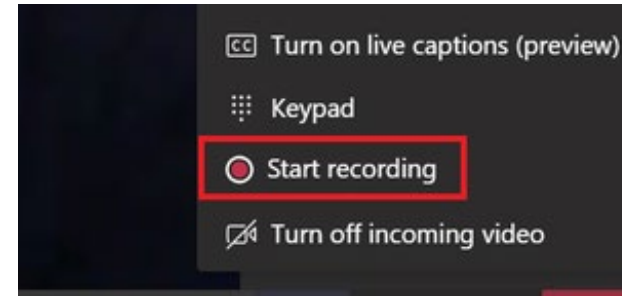
Communicate often

Make it a habit to connect frequently with your manager and your colleagues. Schedule daily or weekly calls to ensure you are staying on track, accountable, and up to date on what your team is doing.



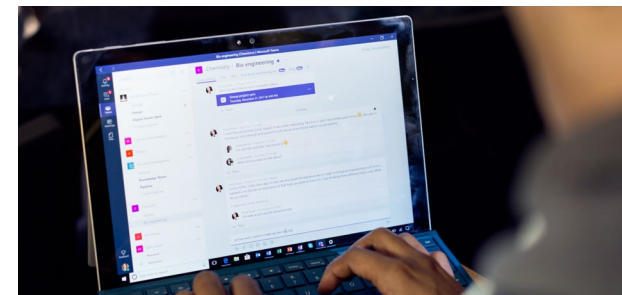
Share your screen

Teams provides the ability to share your screen during meetings. If you need to show a document or walk through a presentation, you can easily screen share and make it visible to all.



Record the meeting

This is a helpful tool when giving presentations or walk-throughs. Once the recording is done, you can share it out to others.

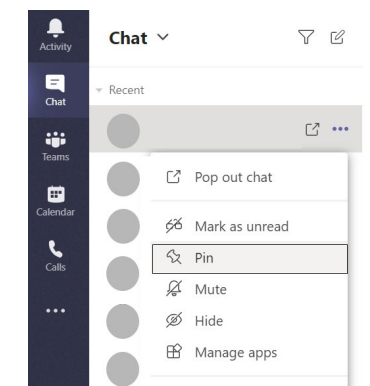


Start group chats

If your organization uses Microsoft Teams, open a Teams channel to connect and collaborate with different groups. Start a shared document to bounce ideas off each other, share progress updates, or access files others have added to the channel.



Pin your favorite colleagues or group chats so they always appear on the upper left of your chat list.

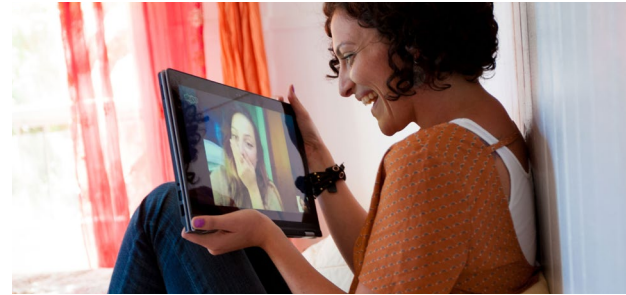


Looking for more ideas on how to stay connected using Teams? Read [4 tips for Working from home with Microsoft Teams](#).

Flexible working

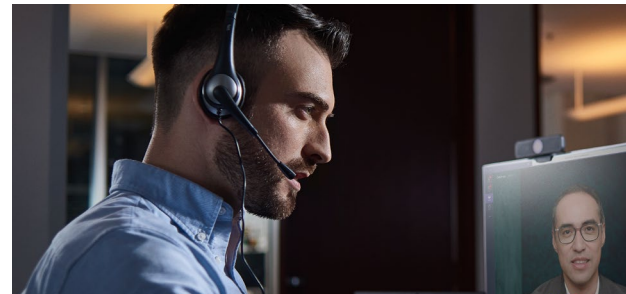
Get video ready with Microsoft Teams

Your webcam can help you connect with colleagues and customers when you are not together in person.



To video or not to video

Video can often be intimidating or distracting. Alternatively, it can help you stay present and engaged. A good compromise is to turn your video on at the start of the meeting, then turn it off once things kick off.



Find a headset

Headsets are helpful for multiple situations like taking calls and blocking out background noise. When considering headsets, think about the following:

- What will you use it most for?
- Do you prefer it to be noise-canceling?
- Should it be wireless, or Bluetooth enabled?



Camera framing

Visibility is key. Point your camera so your face is completely in frame.



Check your surroundings

If you feel like your background may distract the person you're chatting with or if there are privacy concerns, use the "blur my background" option in Microsoft Teams. Learn how to [configure your camera privacy settings in Windows 10](#).



Looking for more Teams resources and trainings?

Learn more on how to [stay productive with Teams while working remotely](#) or click the quick links below.

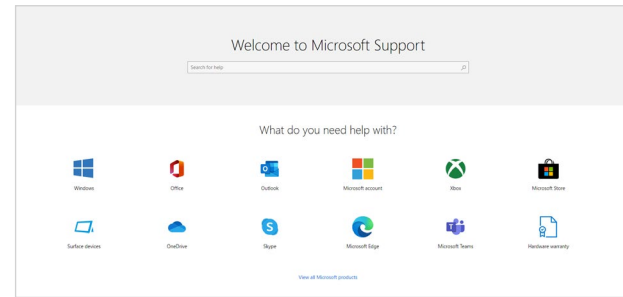
[Instructor-led trainings](#)

[On-demand trainings](#)

[Downloadable guide](#)

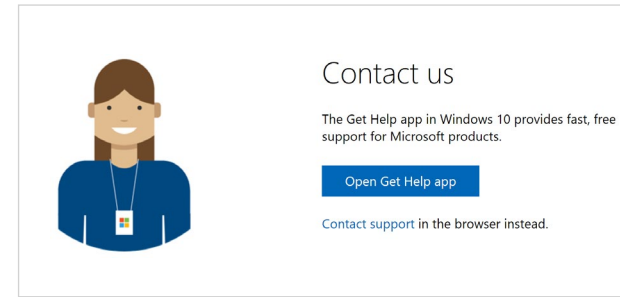
Support resources

Still have questions or need support? Start with these Microsoft resources.



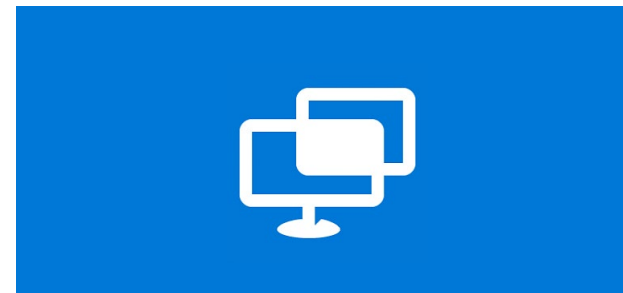
Microsoft Support

Search for help across all Microsoft products on the [Microsoft Support page](#).



Microsoft Virtual Agent

[Microsoft Virtual Agent](#) offers instant technical support 24/7.



Quick Assist in Windows 10

[Quick Assist](#) enables two people to share a device over a remote connection. By allowing a trusted friend, family member, or Microsoft support person to access your computer, you can troubleshoot, diagnose technological issues, and receive instruction on your computer.



Microsoft Communities

Post questions, follow discussions and share your knowledge on Microsoft's different communities.

[Answers Community](#)
[Windows Community](#)



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