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8 Tips for Telecommuting Success

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1. **Utilize reliable technical resources** (note: these resources will generally require a high-speed internet connection)
 - See **Appendix A** that follows this article, for a list of recommended technical resources, including Slack, cloud storage options, and Stanford Zoom video conferencing.
2. Maintain an **open and consistent line of communication** with your supervisor/reportees, identifying and utilizing a method of communication for syncing up on projects and assignments on a regular basis.
 - The **weekly check-in** is effective for non-remote workers, but it becomes even more important for those who are remote as it ensures that there is a time every week where the remote worker can raise concerns, provide feedback, review goals, and feel connected to their manager and/or direct report.
 - Have not only “check-in” meetings (these are short, with each member reporting on what they are doing in less than 3 minutes), but also **continue your full-time group meeting**. Encourage the use of video so that members do not feel isolated (which is a significant risk of remote work).
 - Asking reportees to log their time and submit their logs is another option for monitoring project and assignment progress, and identifying issues/problems soon after they arise.
 - For any employee, please **speak with your faculty supervisor or administrative supervisor**, about any concerns or worries that you are experiencing as a result of working from home. (For additional support, consider reaching out to Stanford's Faculty Staff Help Center <https://cardinalatwork.stanford.edu/faculty-staff-help-center>).
 - **Practice self-promotion** by reporting progress and achievements to your supervisor/coworkers/academic community. Don't let your achievements go by unnoticed. Contact our Communications Manager, Katie Kanagawa, if you have publications forthcoming or announcements/achievements you would like to share with the DBDS community.
3. **Lean on your team:** “Working at home can be isolating, so it's important to feel like part of a team. Do your best to stay in contact with co-workers via messaging platforms, email and/or phone throughout the day. A little conversation always helps.” ([Source](#))

4. Do your best to **establish and maintain healthy boundaries around working hours** (i.e. establish strict work times to maintain a work/life balance). This can be especially challenging when working from home, where the boundaries between work and personal life can become especially blurred.
 5. **Choose and develop a designated work space**, as possible. Separating your work and home spaces can help get you into the right frame of mind when it is time to get to work.
 6. **Develop a routine**, and take regular, clearly identified breaks so you can tackle problems with a clear head.
 7. “In the morning, follow the same routine you would before going into the office: make a cup of coffee, shower and **change out of your pajamas** to help you transition into your work mode.” ([Source](#))
 8. Use the opportunity presented, when you have saved 30-90 minutes time each day by not commuting to campus, to **engage in one aspect of a healthier lifestyle**, whether that be through exercise, meditation, cooking, volunteering, etc. The act of doing something for yourself gives one a sense of control over health fears. Remember, you are not alone.
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Appendix A: Recommended Technical Resources

- Slack:
 - “Slack is a tool that enhances work group communications. It provides a platform for individuals and groups to chat live online and keep conversations organized and accessible from anywhere, anytime. Stanford Slack Grid, or Stanford Slack, is the enterprise version of Slack. It allows teams within Stanford to have separate, but connected, workspaces across the university.”
 - For instructions on how to claim Slack workspace for your group/organization, how to download the app, and how to use Stanford Slack, visit <https://uit.stanford.edu/service/slack>
- Cloud storage systems with team sharing capabilities:
 - **Stanford Medicine Box**
 - “Box supports creation, management, and collaboration for documents that have been written in common desktop tools (for example, Microsoft Word, Excel), and includes a drag and drop interface and versioning. Using Box, you can share project materials with teams across Stanford Medicine, prepare collaborative grants, share clinical schedules and residency applications, access department or lab documents from anywhere in the world, archive old research and store HR and student records.”
 - For instructions on how to get started using Stanford Medicine Box and a User Guide, visit <https://med.stanford.edu/box.html>.
 - Check out the Box Notes feature, which is “an easy-to-use document creation tool built natively in Box. With Box Notes, you can quickly take notes, share ideas and collaborate in real-time with your team—all without

leaving Box. The notes are web-based documents and do not require any other software in order to create, view or edit.”

- **Dropbox and/or Google Docs** can also be useful, particularly if you are collaborating with non-Stanford Medicine collaborators.
 - VPN
 - “VPN is a remote access technology that allows you to securely connect to Stanford’s network as if you were on campus. This makes access to restricted services possible, and provides encryption between your computer and the Stanford network.”
 - More information on how to access VPN can be found at:
<https://uit.stanford.edu/guide/telecommuting>.
 - Stanford Zoom Video Conferencing
 - “Zoom is the leader in modern enterprise video communications, with an easy, reliable cloud platform for video and audio conferencing, collaboration, chat, and webinars across mobile devices, desktops, telephones, and room systems.”
 - To access Stanford Zoom, and watch user-friendly video tutorials, visit
<https://uit.stanford.edu/service/zoom>.
 - See **Appendix B** for a quick guide on best Zoom practices and how to troubleshoot common issues.
 - For additional information on best Zoom practices, visit
<https://uit.stanford.edu/videoconferencing/best-practices>
 - If you need technical assistance with Zoom, contact Lonise Feleti, Pornprang Plangsriskul, or Elizabeth Sarkissian, either using their personal Zoom IDs or emailing/ calling them.
 - Personal Zoom IDs for all of our DBDS admin team members are included in the attached Excel spreadsheet: if you click on any staff member’s personal URL and wait in the Zoom room for them, they will receive an email notification that you are waiting for them and, if at all possible, they will join you shortly.
 - Phone and email contacts are available on our department Staff page at:
<http://med.stanford.edu/dbds/people/who-we-are/staff.html>.
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Appendix B: Best Zoom Practices and How to Troubleshoot Common Issues

- Meeting hosts can:
 - Choose the “Mute participants upon entry” option when scheduling a meeting in Stanford Zoom. This will minimize the risk of people forgetting to mute themselves upon entry.
 - Begin meetings by asking the group to mute themselves when they are not speaking, and remind the group as necessary throughout the duration of the meeting.
 - Manually mute participants, if there continue to be issues with distracting noise. To do so, click on the “Participants” icon in the toolbar at the bottom of the conference call interface, and mute each participant one-by-one.

- Note: only meeting hosts can mute other participants, but if the host is not in attendance, the meeting leader can “claim the host” function. Instructions for how to do so follow (you will need the 6 digit host key, which the person who set up the meeting should be able to provide from their Stanford Zoom “Profile” settings).
 - Click on the “Participants” icon in the toolbar at the bottom of the Zoom Room screen. The participants list will display. Tap “Claim Host” at the bottom of the participants list. Enter your 6-digit host key, then tap “OK.”
- You can also click “More” to rename participants in the “Participants” panel, if someone dials in from their phone and no name appears for them. Consider asking all participants to introduce or announce themselves briefly at the beginning of the meeting, to identify all attendees and test audio settings.
- Participants can:
 - Mute yourselves when you are not speaking. OR click and hold down the space bar to speak, rather than unmuting yourself.
 - Avoid logging into Zoom from more than one device in close physical proximity to one another (for instance, a laptop and a cell phone, or two laptops, or two cell phones), as that can cause unpleasant technical feedback.
 - Make sure your Audio is set to use computer audio (in some cases, computers will default to another option). Make sure your video is set to “Facetime HD Camera (Built-In).”
 - Try leaving the meeting and re-entering to see if that resolves audio/visual problems.
 - If all else fails, please don’t hesitate to reach out to our admin staff for help resolving the issue (details for how to contact these staff members are included in the main article above).



Appendix C: Stanford Telecommuting Resources

- For questions about telecommuting/flexible work arrangements: Email stanfordelr@stanford.edu or call 650-721-4272
- Staff telecommuting and remote work policy: <https://adminguide.stanford.edu/chapter-2/subchapter-1/policy-2-1-20>
- Temporary telecommute agreement: <https://stanford.box.com/s/m101r3536jckbry347z5wkjtxp0yx37>
- Tips for managing virtual teams: <https://cardinalatwork.stanford.edu/manager-toolkit/engage/retention-strategies/managing-virtual-workplace>
- Work Anywhere technology toolkit: <https://workanywhere.stanford.edu>
- Maintain emergency contact information: <https://stanfordyou.stanford.edu>
- COVID-19 updates: <https://healthalerts.stanford.edu/>
 - For researchers: <https://healthalerts.stanford.edu/covid-19-information-and-resources/information-for-faculty-and-researchers/>
 - For staff: <https://healthalerts.stanford.edu/covid-19-information-and-resources/information-for-staff/>
 - For travel: <https://healthalerts.stanford.edu/covid-19-information-and-resources/covid-19-travel-information/>
 - For students: <https://healthalerts.stanford.edu/covid-19-information-and-resources/information-for-students/>

Stanford's Office of Graduate Education recommends the following resources:

If you are experiencing stress, anxiety or fear, please utilize the following campus resources:

- Stanford Counseling and Psychological Services ([CAPS](#)) is dedicated to student emotional health and can be reached 24/7 at 723-3785.
- The Graduate Life Office (<https://glo.stanford.edu/>) is available during office hours at (650) 736-7078, or 24/7 at (650) 723-8222, pager ID number 25085.
- Faculty, staff, and postdocs can contact the [HELP Center](#) at 723-4577.
- Santa Clara County maintains an anonymous crisis line that is available 24 hours, 7 days a week, at 1-800-704-0900 (Mental Health Services).
- SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Distress Helpline (related to any natural or human-caused disaster) is accessible 24/7 at 1-800-985-5990 or via text (send TALKWITHUS to 66746; Press 2 for Spanish).
- If you would like to talk with a member of the OGE team, either in person or through Zoom, or you need help getting connected to the right resource, email oge-helpme@stanford.edu.