

# Tips for working remotely in the first few weeks during the Alert Level 4 lockdown

Our new environment will involve us using old skills in new ways. We will need to manage our work and environment while retaining connections to our team and our colleagues. This resource is designed to support you in the initial stage of working from home because of the Alert Level 4 lockdown.

## Be aware of and communicate the challenges you may be facing

These are some of the challenges that you may be experiencing and which may have an impact.

- A sense of social isolation and feeling disconnected from work and your team
- Distractions at home – particularly with schools closed and other family members working at home
- Concern about family and friends
- Concern about having to learn new technology and different ways of doing things

Some strategies that may help in the first couple of weeks include:

- Don't underestimate the **time** it may take you to set up a working space. You may be dealing with internet issues or shared spaces and it may take time to establish a routine. It may take a trial period and some changes before you establish a permanent routine. There are some helpful tips for [setting up your work area](#) on the main COVID-19 information page.
- It won't be business as usual and some activities may have to be done differently or may take more time. Talk to your manager about issues that you may be facing and your individual circumstances.
- Try the tools that are available to connect with your team and others. There is information available on how to use [Zoom](#) and [Microsoft Teams](#).
- If you have any queries, there is a [dedicated contact centre for HR questions](#) related to COVID-19.

- **Routines and habits** provide security and stability, and this is especially important for remote working during lockdown. Have a discussion with your colleagues about the activities that have helped cue them and others into remote working – share the lessons learned in the first few weeks as part of your team meetings or team conversation channel on Microsoft Teams. For example, consider wearing work clothes and perhaps making a packed lunch as normal. Talk about the ways in which, if individual circumstances allow, you might be able to signal to members of your household that you have a video meeting scheduled or need to concentrate.
- Create opportunities for connecting socially with your colleagues. This might be as simple as having time at the start or end of team calls just for non-work items, a virtual lunch, or a short morning tea chat to do a quiz. Your colleagues may be working or living alone.

## Maintain your wellbeing

How you maintain **your wellbeing** affects your ability adapt to this new environment Remember the safety briefing on an airplane; put your oxygen mask on first in order to be able to help other people. You could join the [Health and Wellbeing Toolkit](#) Yammer group that includes safe and practical online resources to help you.

Focus on [keeping well while remote working](#) including setting a timer to take regular breaks to stretch, go outside in the fresh air and exercise – this is very important during this period of household isolation. There are a range of resources available to support you in maintaining your physical and mental wellbeing including the [Employee Assistance Programme](#). Remember they have a range of resources on their site and their first point of contact is [counsellingsupportnz@benestar.com](mailto:counsellingsupportnz@benestar.com)

Our Occupational Health team is going to continue to assist employees with health and wellbeing queries, including meeting with you virtually on Zoom, email [ohn@otago.ac.nz](mailto:ohn@otago.ac.nz) or [carina.perner@otago.ac.nz](mailto:carina.perner@otago.ac.nz) to arrange an appointment.

- Every hour, [take three deep breaths or look out of the window](#) and pause – we need to remain **calm** in rapidly changing situations. Here is a [Coping Calendar](#) document that may be useful.
- Talk regularly with people in your circle of support.
- Avoid making irrevocable decisions when you are hungry or tired – consider putting a two-minute delay on your sent emails.
- Every day, get some sleep/rest, exercise, drink plenty of water and eat regularly.

## Finally

“I’ve learned that **people** will forget what you said, **people** will forget what you did, but **people** will never forget how you made them feel.” Maya Angelou