

Weeks 3-4 in the Alert Level 4 lockdown: Making it work – further tips and resources for remote working

For many people the initial adrenaline surge of the early weeks of Alert Level 4 has passed. Brene Brown describes this as a time of vulnerability where we need to dig deep for strength and focus on simple sustainable practices. Working in a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) environment can bring concerns around matters such as home schooling, family members without jobs and the practical implications of Levels 4 and 3 for work and life. It is time to consider what you have already accomplished and celebrate this.

Whilst the resources in Weeks 1 and 2 concentrated on using existing skills to help achieve extraordinary changes at work and home, we are now in a time where we start embedding ways of working to see us through upcoming weeks and months. These four tips and further resources on [remote working](#) build on the earlier materials available in the [Archive](#) and the [Coronavirus COVID-19 information](#) page on the University of Otago website.

1. **Continue to start with yourself.** The recent break provided a pause to refresh and refocus in our bubbles. Were there any things that you did which you could keep in your work day routine as part of sustaining your energy?

Block time in your diary in advance to do something every day which sustains your well-being. Deliberately create some JOMO moments (Joy of Missing Out) where you step back from the digital devices to do a puzzle, read a joke or have virtual coffee with a peer. Check the [Yammer sites](#) for interesting resources. In order to re-focus between tasks, actively create micro-pauses such as looking out of the window between meetings. [As you work from home](#), start each day identifying the priorities and accepting that, under current conditions, some things cannot be done or can only be completed to a standard which is “good enough”. It is not Business As Usual – it is Business Amidst Unusual Circumstances. [Lucy Hone in her TED talk](#) refers to a habit of resilient people – they differentiate between the things that they can change and those that they cannot and focus on what they can do.

2. **Remind yourself and connect back to your role and purpose at this time.** Is it time for a [“purpose check in”](#)? Ask yourself simple questions like “Where am I contributing?”, “Where is my impact?” and “What difference am I making?” Regardless of where you are working, you can establish a [sense of stability](#) and connection to the wider purpose of your team.
3. **Pause, take stock and celebrate.** The events over the last period have led to changes in the way we work and [how we connect](#). As you connect with people, build a library of stories around the *personal* aspects of working remotely (e.g. the cleanest house ever! – or your favourite COVID-19 cartoon or song). Some teams are building a repository of photos and videos as a historical record. You might include this in the University COVID-19 digital time capsule (mail to: archive.covid19@otago.ac.nz with department name, description of item and from either staff or student).

[Thriving at work](#) within this environment may bring some lessons for the future. As you connect *professionally* with peers and colleagues start sharing the **professional** aspects of working – what practices might we keep in the future? [What networks do you wish to retain](#) or rebuild? If, in 12 months’ time, someone asked you about the lessons of this time, what would you answer?

4. **Look ahead.** When thinking about Alert Level 3 in the future, what might this mean for you and your colleagues? What are the opportunities as well as risks? [What networks do you wish to retain](#) or rebuild? What plans or activities have been placed on hold and might need to be reconsidered or recommenced?

What skills would you like to build in this period of time to enhance your performance or sense of ability in the future? How can you build these now by tapping into the learning channels available such as [LinkedIn Learning](#), [GoSkills](#), or completing the Learning Plan on the [Learning and Development webpage](#)?

Professionally, there will have been items that have been parked and now may be the time to revisit them and plan for future work during Alert Level 3.

It's about living in the moment and appreciating the smallest things. Surrounding yourself with the things that inspire you and letting go of the obsessions that want to take over your mind. It is a daily struggle sometimes and hard work but happiness begins with your own attitude and how you look at the world.

[Gretchen Rubin](#)