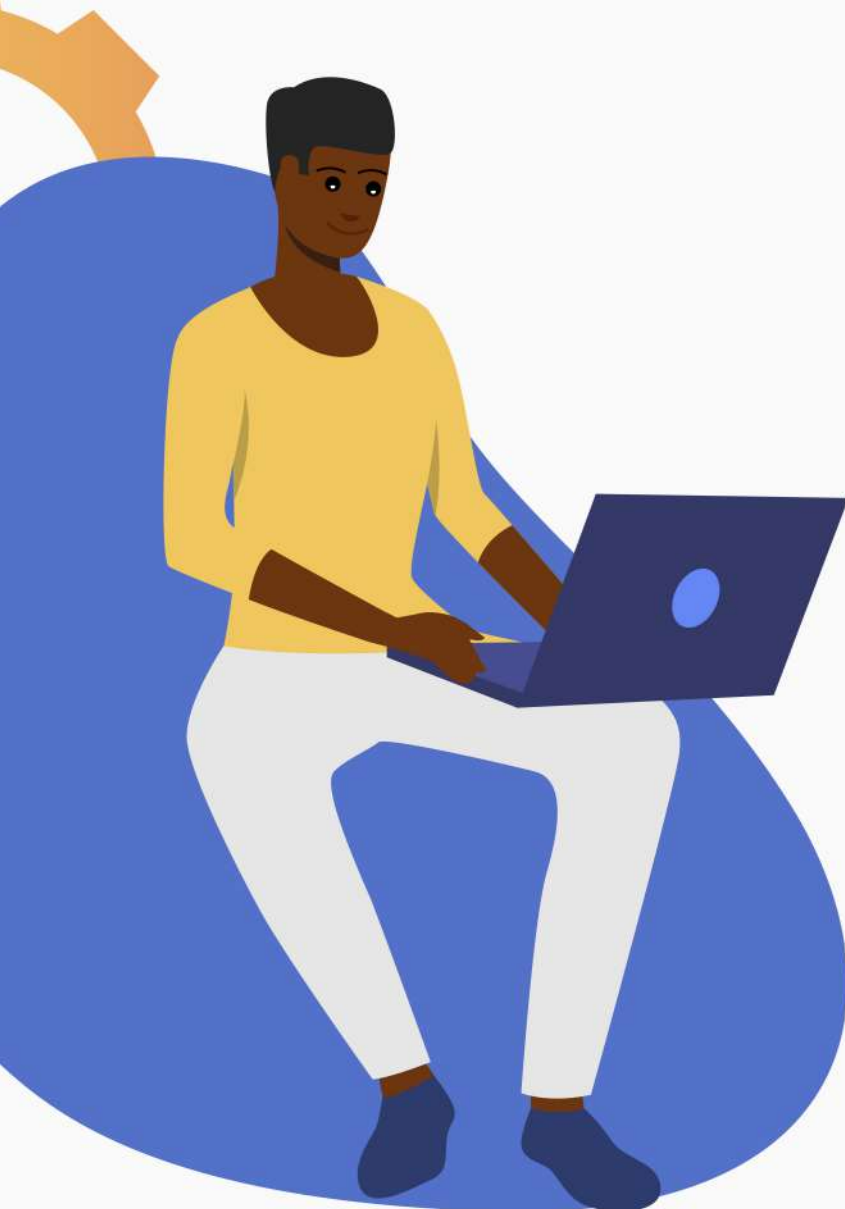




THE NIGERIAN GUIDE TO WORKING FROM HOME

BY HYGEIA HMO

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM COMPUTER VISION SYNDROME (CVS)



According to Bloomberg, office hours have increased by about 3 hours on average since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic forced many companies to adopt a work-from-home policy which has its own share of pros and cons.

Before now, the average office worker spent about 1,700 hours annually in front of a digital screen. It is safe to say that this figure has spiked dramatically.

How does this relate to Computer Vision Syndrome?

Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) refers to the range of symptoms that you can experience as a result of prolonged use of computers and digital screens like phones and tablets.

CVS is caused by a variety of reasons including:

- Poor lighting of your surroundings which can cause eye strain
- Glare from your computer screen
- Untreated vision problems
- Inappropriate viewing distance and angle
- Poor sitting posture

If you have CVS, you may experience some of these symptoms:

- Blurred vision
- Dry and red eyes
- Eyestrain
- Neck pain
- Back pain
- Headaches

These symptoms can be irritating and impact negatively on your productivity and also reduce your quality of life.

The big question here is

HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF?

- **Plan your day**

You tend to spend more time at work when working from home, and you also take fewer breaks. So, you need to make a timetable for yourself. Pick a particular time every day to go on a break and give your eyes and mind some rest. This will help in reducing the strain on your eyes that comes from focusing on a screen for hours with little or no rest in between.

- **Adjust your settings**

Reduce the brightness of your computer screen. Ideally, your computer should not be brighter than your surroundings, as this makes it harder for you to see. Use your phone or computer's night light setting to help reduce glare and the blue light emissions from the screens.

Don't be scared of toggling the font size to a more comfortable size for reading and increase the contrast to a suitable level for you.

- **Work On Your Workstation**

The proper distance between your face and your screen is 20 to 28 inches. If you have to strain or bend your neck to see, then you need to adjust the distance. Also, your eyes should be a bit above the level of the screen. Ensure that your seat has a back rest, you can use a pillow to prop yourself up as well to reduce the strain on your back.

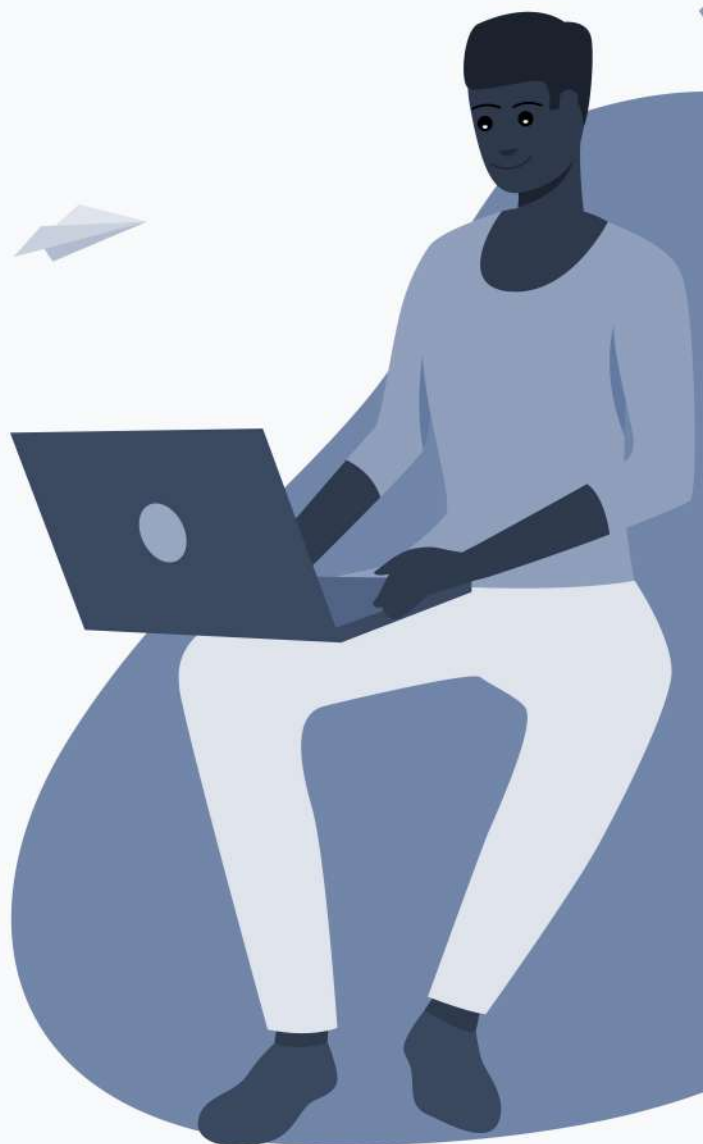
- **The 20 – 20 – 20 Rule**

Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away (about one and half times the length of a car) for 20 seconds. It may be hard to time yourself so you can download an app that reminds you to take an eye break and to blink also. Blinking helps to keep your eyes wet and prevent them from drying out. You can try out this app.

- **See A Doctor**

Your CVS may be a result of untreated eye problems, so you should pay a visit to the optometrist regularly to get your eyes checked.

Luckily, we've made it easier for you to access the best healthcare, just click on this to get connected and buy a plan for yourself



EATING RIGHT WHILE WORKING FROM HOME

Do you find yourself snacking on unhealthy food while working from home? Or maybe you are eating a lot, barely getting any exercise and getting rounder in the middle. All over the world, many workers are struggling with their eating habits while working remotely. You probably miss lunch breaks and the interesting conversations with your colleagues. Maybe you don't like making your own meals, or you barely find time to do so. Whatever the problem may be, you are just in luck because we have some valuable tips for you.



• Eat Healthy Snacks

It is very tempting to snack on literally anything while working at home. Unhealthy snacks are often pre-made & easy to eat. Some examples are pastries, biscuits, cakes, and plantain or potato chips. You've probably been eating them a lot more since you started working from home.

It is healthier to snack on nuts and dried fruits. Snack on (not more than 3 portions), but snack right. Some healthy snacks to indulge in are boiled corn and ube, cashew nuts, tiger nuts, coconut as well.

• Prepare a work schedule.

You may find yourself skipping meals and making up with energy drinks and processed food. Unlike the traditional work setting where there's a period set aside for food, remote work often lacks such structure.

Draw up a work schedule that should include your break period and mealtime. You should set it up to ensure that you get 3 square meals!

Don't forget to prepare your meals instead of eating ready-made meal-packs. This way, you can control what you consume, and this is great for your wellness.

• Resist the urge to eat during every break

Most of us tend to overeat while working from home for various reasons. For some, it is a way of coping with stress for others, there is just a lot of food lying around.

Curb this habit to avoid eating too many calories and gaining unwanted weight. A simple way to do this is to avoid eating during every break. Eat only at apportioned times, and control your portions too.

• Eat without any distractions.

Eat away from your desk! It is quite simple. You may think that eating at your desk is not bad. Well, it is. Eating at your workstation makes for a poorly enjoyed meal. The notification beeps, the emails coming in, and the sight of more work may prevent you from eating well.

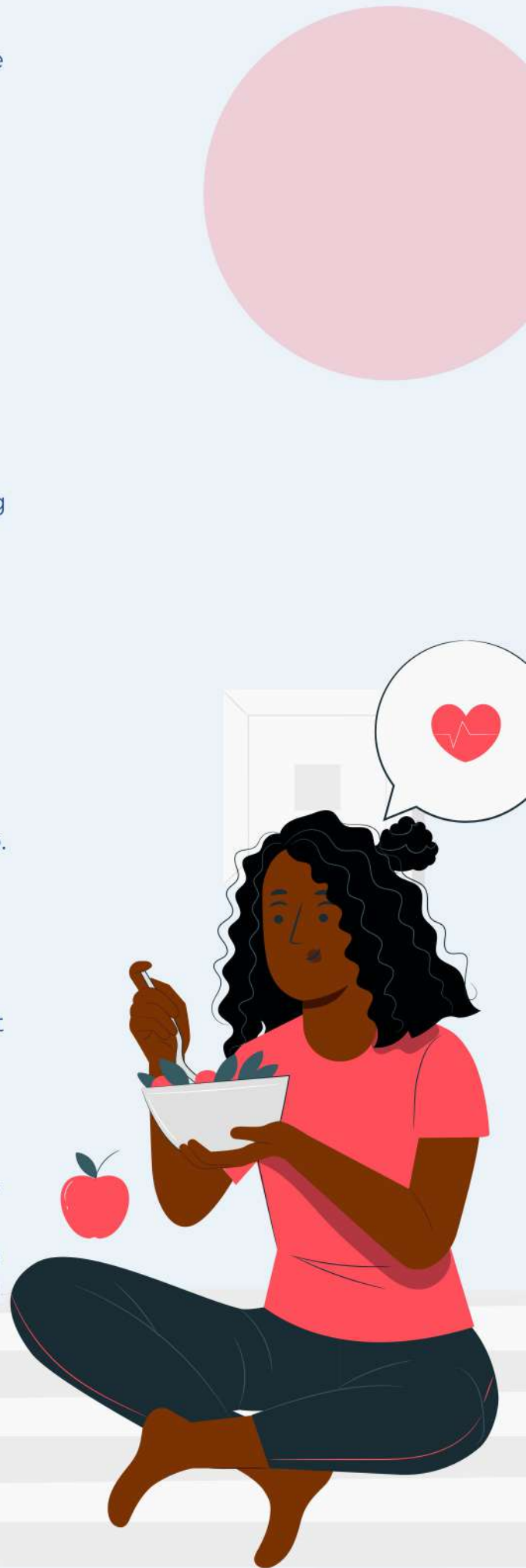
The work isn't going anywhere and the 15 to 30 minutes meal break won't stop you from being productive. Remember that habits are hard to break, and if you form the habit of eating while trying to work, you may find it difficult to stop later.

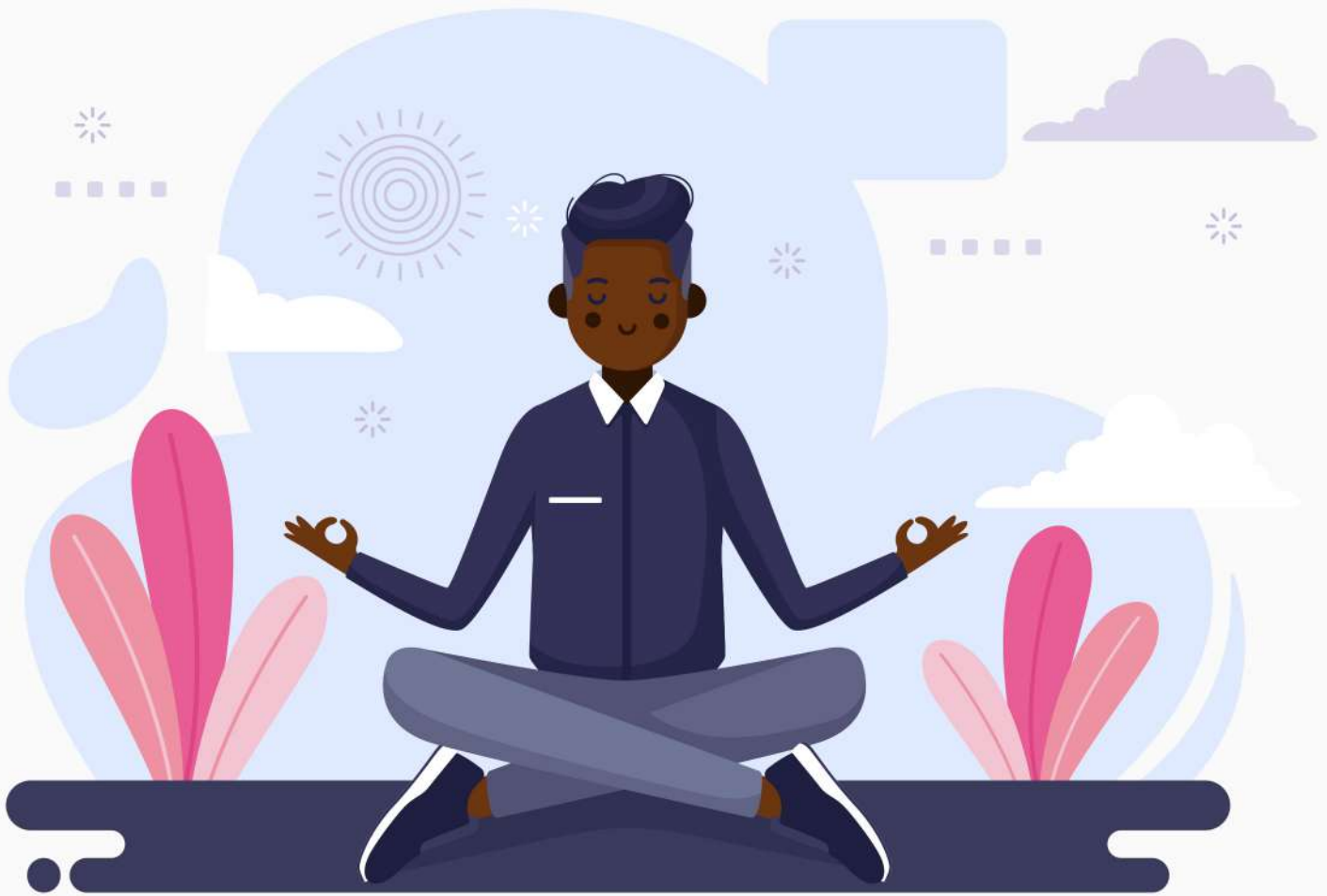
• Drink Water (Not Caffeine Or Fizzy Drinks)

Water is the safest and healthiest drink for you. You can spice it up with any fruit of your choice. Lemon is a popular choice. Avoid carbonated drinks, because they don't do the job of quenching your thirst the way water does.

For variety, you can also drink tea or freshly prepared juice.

Easy on the caffeine too.





HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR PEACE WHILE WORKING FROM HOME

You may be wondering if working from home is truly a blessing. You may be struggling with managing the home front and delivering effectively at work. Separating your work life from your family life is indeed harder when you are working from home. Nonetheless, you can do it. You definitely need to put other measures in place while working remotely, if you want to maintain your peace.

Here is how you can achieve this.

- **Take breaks**

There's a high chance that you spend most of your work hours in front of your laptop screen without getting up. It doesn't help that you are at home and have everything you need within your reach.

Working non-stop for prolonged periods can have adverse effects on your mental health. You may find yourself irritated, short-tempered, and even anxious. Your productivity also tends to dip over time. To avoid these, schedule short breaks at regular intervals and spend them away from your workspace. Take a stroll and bask in the daylight or interact with your family members or neighbours to give yourself a change in scenery.

- **Set Boundaries**

Switching between work-mode and family mode can be demanding. It can also affect your output.

To solve this, you need to set clear boundaries. Set up a workstation and tell everyone to stay away unless necessary.

You can also paste notes on the back of your laptop or device when you are in meetings to notify those around you.

Also, you need to find ways to keep your children if you have any, occupied. Computer games, books, and online classes are good ways to do this.

- **Have Video Meetings**

Sometimes, the loneliness of working from home can be overwhelming, especially if you live alone. You could have more video meetings so you get to see the faces of your colleagues, and feel less lonely.

Video meetings are great for effective communication too because you get to pick up non-verbal cues you would not notice during voice calls.

- **Schedule Zoom Parties**

Everyone knows that Friday heralds the weekend, a good time to destress.

You may not be able to hang out with your friends as usual, thanks to COVID-19. However, the unwinding that Friday brings (which does a lot of good for your mental health anyway) does not have to end. You can schedule and attend Zoom parties or game nights with your friends.

- **Practice Mindfulness**

Mindfulness is a way of maintaining awareness of what you are sensing and feeling. It helps you in regulating your emotions, managing anxiety, and dealing with pressure. Mindfulness helps you with coping with intense and overwhelming moments. We are living in uncertain times, so there is a lot of anxiety.



HERE'S HOW TO START:

- Take note of your surroundings, and what you are feeling
- Acknowledge your feelings, don't try to control them, just let them exist, then let them go.
- Focus on taking deep breaths, and observing your emotions and the sensations around your body.
- Mindfulness is about awareness, and it can be useful in highly charged situations.

• Plan Your Day

Start your day with a To-Do List. Making a daily schedule helps you to prioritize your work and stay productive. Ticking off items from your list can also leave you with a sense of accomplishment. Lists are great for tracking and managing your progress.

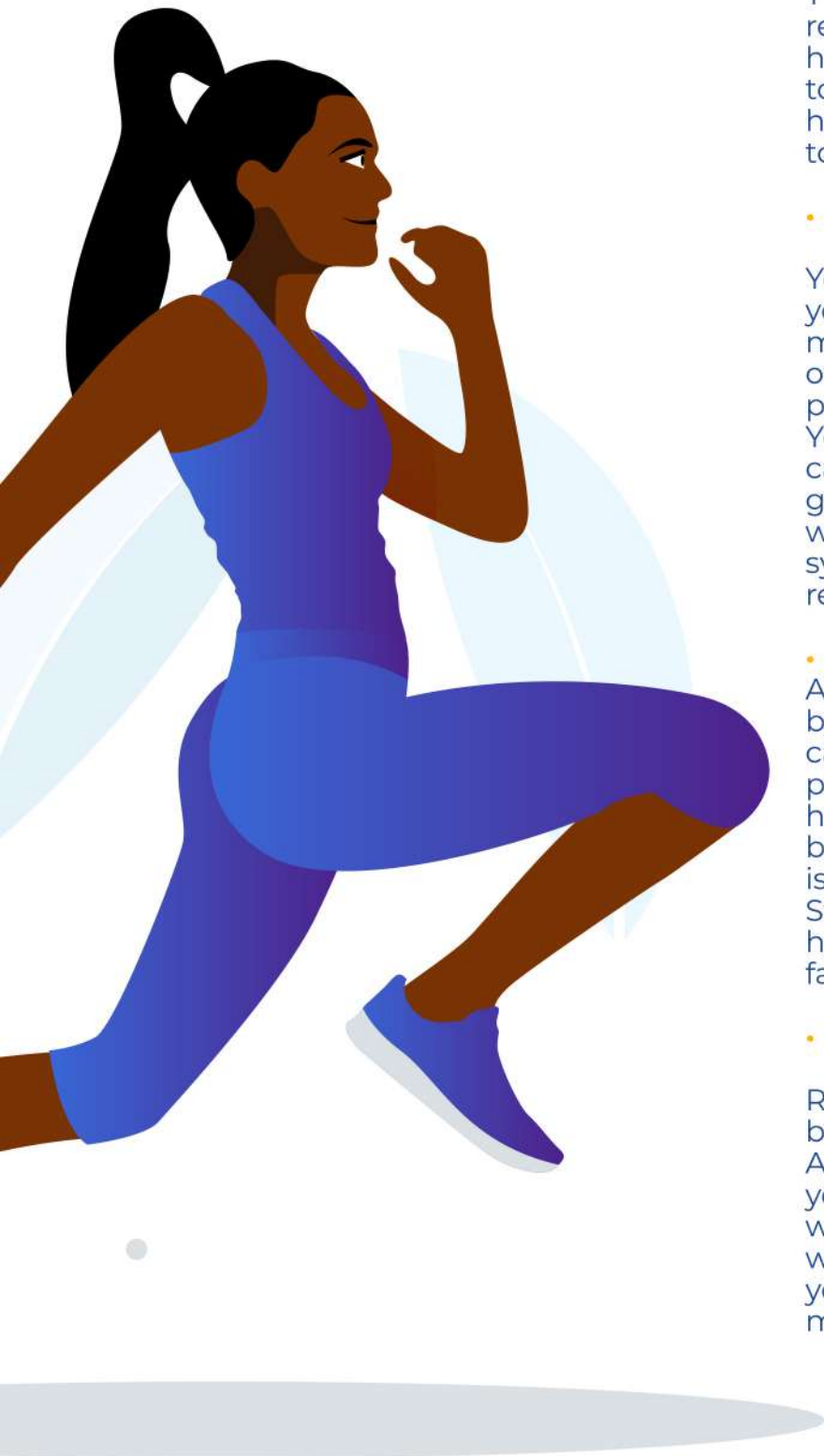
A bonus point for you is to learn to say no and stick to official work hours as much as possible. There's an assumption that you are less busy because you are working from home, and most of your colleagues operate on this premise.

You have to draw the line and say 'No'.



FITNESS TIPS

WHILE WORKING FROM HOME



Working from home can be amazing. No more rush hour traffic, the stress of your daily commute is gone, and best of all, you get to answer calls from your favorite couch.

It is amazing!

But, there's a downside to this. Working from home makes you less physically active.

No more walks to the bus stop or the meeting room. Everything happens while you are on your chair.

The dangers of a sedentary lifestyle are real, and it can lead to many undesirable health effects. Thankfully, there are ways to remain active while working from home, and we've put a few of them together.

- **Replace Your Commute Time With Workout Time**

You probably spend up to an hour on your journey to the office. Maybe even more. Try to use at least 30 minutes out of that time to engage in moderate physical activity every day.

You can go for a run or a brisk walk. You can also skip, do lunges or push-ups. The great thing about working out before work is that it wakes up your entire system and leaves you feeling alert and ready to start your day.

- **Stand & Work**

Another simple way to remain active is by working from a standing desk. You can improvise by getting a table or platform that is at your elbow level at home. You can also stack it with enough books to ensure that your laptop screen is at eye level.

Standing on an anti-fatigue mat also helps to prevent you from getting tired fast.

- **Swap your boring seat for an exercise stability ball**

Replace your work chair with an exercise ball for short moments during the day. An exercise ball is a great way to keep your core (trunk) muscles active while working. So, while you are focusing on work, your muscles are working to keep your back upright and counter the ball's movement.

- **Have active meetings**

You do not need to sit at your desk for every meeting. You can go on a walk during a meeting, or even walk around your home. A walking-meeting is an easy way to ensure you stay active during the day.

Also, the change of scenery during your walk can spark up new ideas in your mind and make you more productive. Walk more, sit less!

- **Make Your Work Station Accessible**

Sometimes, the greatest obstacle to staying physically active while working from home is your workstation. Your workstation should be easy to get into and leave as well. That way, it will be easier for you to stand up and do some stretches while working.

- **Keep Moving**

Run up and down the stairs at home during short breaks, walk briskly (or jog if you can) when moving around your home. Do wall push-ups whenever you pass a wall at home. Stretch your body intermittently. Always find little ways of adding light exercises to mundane activities.

Also, you should avoid sitting down for long stretches without moving around (ideally, stand up and stretch every hour).

If you do all these, you will be well on your way to being a bonafide member of the fit-fam club while working from home.

