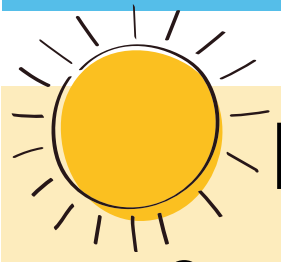


How to improve well-being while working from home



Let in the light

- Sunlight triggers the brain to release the hormone serotonin. It helps people to feel calm and focussed, boosts their mood and reduces anxiety.
- if you can, put your desk near a window. Make sure you can draw the curtains back fully and keep windows clean. Dirt on windows can significantly reduce the amount of sunlight passing through them.



Declutter

- Studies have found that clutter can raise your level of cortisol, a stress hormone. That may be because clutter delivers conflicting stimuli to the brain, which then has to work harder to filter out unhelpful signals.
- The problem with clutter is over-stimulation.
- So have a proper clear out, get organised, and get some proper storage if you can.



Use plants

- Many claims are made for the mental benefits of contact with the natural world: reducing blood pressure, anxiety, stress and rumination (endlessly going over the same thoughts) while improving attention, memory and sleep.
- Bringing plants and other natural objects and images into your home work space can have a significant impact.

Shut out the noise



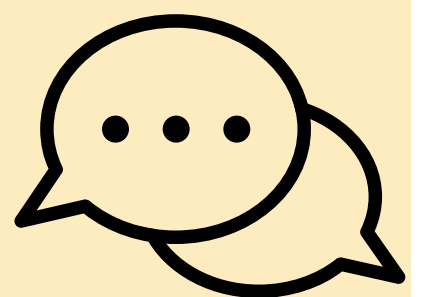
- Different parts of your brain are constantly trying to recognise different noises and changes in sounds. That can be hugely distracting from trying to work.
- Earplugs might be a solution for some, but if you want to go further, soft furnishings, thicker carpets and heavier curtains to absorb the sound are some of the things architects suggest.



Stand up

- If you're not going to work, you're probably missing out on physical activity that can help keep you mentally as well as physically fit.
- Studies have found that exercise is a natural anti-anxiety treatment, relieving stress, boosting physical and mental energy, and enhancing well-being through the release of endorphins.

Social contact... not just online



- Get out at lunchtime and in the evenings - connect with friends, family and neighbours - people you feel connected to.
- Humans are social animals. Staring into a screen on Zoom is not enough.