



LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY
APPLETON, WISCONSIN

Telecommuting/Teleworking

Telecommuting is working from an area away your main office and at times with less formal structure and more freedom in completing tasks and/or projects. To be at its most successful, this arrangement requires careful planning and discipline. The following are some tools for success in telecommuting.

Defined a Work Space

It is important to identify a work space that is most suitable to completing task work and projects. It is ideal to find a space away from distractions. Having a suitable workspace will establish a mental cue for work time thus leading to higher productivity and focus.

Ergonomic Workstation

When identifying a work space, keep in mind the ergonomic safety of the area. Having a safe workstation will help minimize the potential ergonomic injuries to the back, neck, and shoulders. Be mindful of your posture while working at a computer. Bad posture can lead to stiffness and soreness, back pain, and “tech neck”, the ubiquitous bent-neck position used when focusing on digital devices.

The following are some ergonomic posture suggestions basics for desk work:

- Arrange workstations to minimize glare from overhead lights, desk lamps and windows.
- The monitor screen should be located directly in front of the user, at eye level to reduce/eliminate twist in the neck or torso.
- The head should be facing forward and balance level on the neck
- Shoulders should be relaxed, with arms hanging normally and elbows kept close to the body
- The back of the chair should be adjusted so that the lumbar support is positioned lightly below your belt line.
- Hands, wrists, and forearms should be in a straight line roughly parallel to the floor
- Hips should be at an angle of 90 degrees, with thighs approximately parallel to the floor and knees at approximately the same height as the hips.
- The height of the chair should allow your feet to be flat on the floor, or on a footrest.

Set a Routine

Telecommuting will mean a different routine. No longer starting the workday with a morning coffee or conversing with colleagues. The drive to work that symbolizes the beginning of the workday will no longer happened. By developing a new routine, this will symbolize the new workday for telecommuters.

Some telecommuters will leave their home, go around the block, return and begin their workday. For others, it might be completing a morning exercise to get into work mode. Employees should find a new routine that will work best for them.

Telecommuting Schedule

Transitioning to this work arrangement might lead to adjusting work schedule. This should be reviewed and finalized with your supervisor prior to the start of telecommuting and as adjustments may need to be made.

How will telecommuting affect the current work schedule? Can your schedule remain as is or flex to reflect telecommuting? If your work schedule changes, updating your email calendar will be helpful for others to know when you will be available. Also, communicate schedule changes to others in the department to bring this to their attention. It is important to begin and finish work according to your new work schedule in order to get acclimated to the new work routine.

Make a “Things –to Do” list

Creating a list of assignments, tasks, and/or projects for telecommuting days will help commuters stay organized and on track. Ideally, the list should be created days prior to telecommuting to identify resources needed to support telecommuting tasks/projects. Making a list the morning of commuting will also keep things moving. Managing work efficiently is critical in being successful.

Do be aware of the length of time required to complete each task/projects and adjust the list according to match work schedule and/or deadlines. If changes need to be made to the telework plan, please communicate with supervisor and/or colleagues.

Staying Organized

A challenge to telecommuting is have keeping resources and materials organized while commuting between two work spaces. At the early stages of telecommuting, develop an organization system to have the necessary resources and materials at all times.

Meeting Deadlines

Telecommuting generally should not impact tasks/projects deadlines. If deadlines need to be adjusted, please discuss potential dates with colleagues/supervisor.

Stay Connected

A major challenge with teleworking is staying connected with colleagues and supervisor. It is important to have some form of open and continuous communication with your department. Open and continuous communication is a good way of keeping supervisor informed of current progress and status of assignments/projects, and any difficulties you may have encountered.

Channels of Communications

There are a few channels of communication the University has that teleworkers can utilize:

- Email/Outlook
 - When possible, set deadlines for responding to emails so others feel supported even when you are not on-site.
 - Consider utilizing your calendar so colleagues can see when you are available and in meetings.
- Skype
 - Provides a real-time communication. The perfect way to instant message team members for a quick response when needed. Multiple people can be added to one chat group. Information Technology helpdesk can assist, if needed, with setting up Skype account.
- Zoom
 - A great way to have conference call/meeting with the whole team. Directions on how to host a meeting and send a meeting invite can be found [here](#).

Prioritize Privacy

Teleworking is not excluded from complying with the University's information security recommendations. Resources, and training on Information Security can be found [here](#). It is important to exam the privacy of the workspace to ensure the space is safe to be working on sensitive information.

Dependent Care and Telecommuting

Telecommuting does allow for more flexibility, however, it is not a permanent substitute or replacement for dependent care. Telework should be completed in a safe and private space with limited distractions whenever possible.