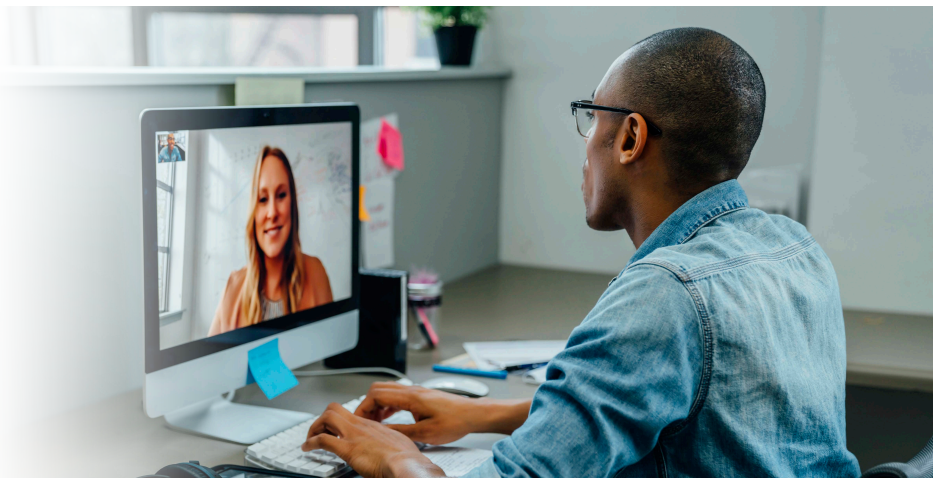


Working at home: Tips for staying healthy and avoiding burnout



A year into the pandemic, many people are still working from home to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. For some, it has been a welcome opportunity to avoid a commute and have a little extra flexibility. But others miss the opportunity to connect with their co-workers in person and — as much as they may love their family — miss having a little time away each day. However you're feeling about telecommuting, there are ways to make the situation work better so you can focus more and have less stress.

Challenges with working at home

While some people are fortunate to have a quiet work space at home and enjoy using it, many people are dealing with situations that make work-life balance seem impossible. You may be:

- Trying to manage a crowded space with a significant other who is also working from home
- Dealing with kids who are home from school while you're trying to manage your workload
- Feeling isolated at home

If you've been working from home for a year, these stresses certainly aren't new. But that doesn't mean they've gotten any easier. And without a way to manage the stress you may be feeling, you could be at risk of burnout.

Understanding burnout

Burnout is caused by ongoing stress. It puts your "fight or flight" system into overdrive, which can release hormones that are damaging to your physical and mental health. This may lead to chronic health problems like heart disease, depression and severe anxiety.

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If you're working from home with little exposure to the outside world, that may be a potential cause for feeling burned out at work. And if you're juggling additional challenges such as at-home school or finding it difficult to separate between work and home life, you may be at risk too.

Your personality traits and lifestyle habits may add to burnout. For example, if you have a high-achieving, type A personality or you are a perfectionist, these traits can make you more at risk for job burnout. Similarly, if you lack supportive, close relationships, you'll be more at risk for burnout.

Managing stress while working from home

If you're feeling stressed, **Here4TN** can help. Our master's-level specialists are available 24/7 to provide confidential support. You can also get five online or in-person counseling sessions per issue, per year at no cost* to you. **WorkLife Services** can help by tackling your to-do list, such as finding a new daycare or locating vaccine clinics in your area.

Try these tips too:

- **Find ways to manage the stress.** Deep breathing, stretching, meditation or a walk outside can all help. There are also apps, such as the **Sanvello app**, that can help you deal with stress.
- **Create regular routines.** Make time for what you need, including time to shower, get ready, work, eat lunch and go for a walk. It may be tempting to skip some of your usual steps because you're working from home. But don't let work take up your entire day.
- **Get set up for success.** Find a practical spot in your home for your work space. If you already have a home office, that's great. If not, look for a spot that's comfortable and organized. Take time to make it your own.
- **Make a game plan for kids.** If your children will be with you at home during the day, make sure to plan ahead. Create a regular schedule to help minimize distractions during your workday. You can find suggested schedules online to help keep children busy with schoolwork or other activities throughout the day.
- **Stay connected.** Make sure you're communicating with others aside from co-workers. Decide how you'll keep in touch with friends and family — through texts, phone calls, video calls or even letters.
- **Set boundaries.** Limit exposure to news coverage. This includes social media. Know sources where you can find reliable information, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), World Health Organization at [who.int](https://www.who.int) or your local government health authority.

Get help managing stress, burnout or family relationships.

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***Here4TN** Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services are available to you and your family at no extra cost as part of your benefits. The five EAP visits per year, per issue are per individual. Members are ineligible for EAP visits while they are currently receiving Behavioral Health Services.

State and Higher Education: EAP services are available to all benefits-eligible employees and their eligible family members, even if they are not enrolled in medical insurance.

Local Education and Local Government: EAP services are available to employees who are enrolled in medical insurance. Dependents are eligible even if they are not enrolled in medical insurance.

All members (employees and dependents) enrolled in medical insurance are also eligible for behavioral health benefits.

This program should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. This program is not a substitute for a doctor's or professional's care. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against Optum or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g., employer or health plan). This program and its components may not be available in all states or for all group sizes and is subject to change. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.