

Wellbeing toolkit

Switching off



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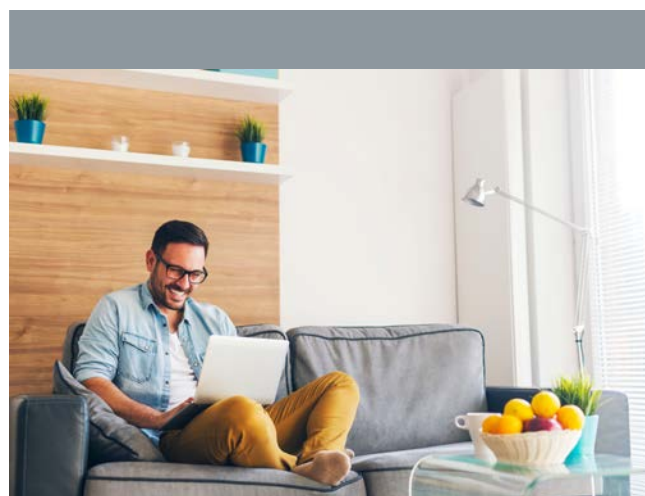
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Health

Switching off

Now that we're all spending a lot of time at home, it's easy for boundaries to become blurred.

Whether you're working from home or still going to your workplace, being able to switch off and allow your mind and body to recover is really important for your wellbeing.

In this factsheet, we'll look at simple ways to protect the boundaries between work and home, relax and stay feeling your best



In this factsheet

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- Create a routine
- Switching off routine template

Process the day

The first step to switching off from the work day is making sure you put aside time to process what's happened that day.

It can be really hard to let go of something and put it behind you if you haven't had enough time to acknowledge it and reflect on it.

For many of us, the buffer of commuting time has gone, putting us under pressure to switch straight from work mode to home life.

To make the transition easier, put aside a small amount of time at the end of your work day to process what happened.

We're all unique so different people will find different techniques helpful when it comes to processing the day.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Write it out:** This can be particularly helpful if something's upset you or made you angry. Try writing a letter to that person or writing about what happened. Putting it down on paper can help create distance and give you perspective.
- **Talk to someone:** Whether it's calling a friend, video calling family or even meeting someone for a socially distanced walk, talking about a problem or experience with someone you trust can be a good way to process it and move on.
- **Create a plan:** For some people, writing their to-do list for the next day can stop thoughts about work running round their head.

Exercise:

What techniques could you use to help process the day?

What would be the best time of day to do this?

Create a routine

From limits on how often we can go out to seeing friends and family, many aspects of our normal routines have changed since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Faced with all this change, it can be easy for the boundaries between work and home to become blurred and for our stress levels to rise.

To help you make time for self-care, think about creating some 'book ends' for your day - morning and evening routines to help you reduce stress.

These routine 'book ends' could include practical things, such as preparing your lunch for the next day, as well as activities that help you unwind and de-stress.

Signals such as taking a shower or changing your clothes when you get home from work can help reinforce that the work day is over.

Creating a routine and sticking to it will help signal to your body and mind that it's time to relax, making it easier to switch off.

What to include in a routine

When you're putting together a routine to help you switch off, think about including things from the following three categories.

1. Signals

Signals are actions that you do at a similar time each day that help flag to your mind and body that it's time to switch off. Here are just a few ideas for signals you could include in your routine.

- Change clothes
- Put on music
- Take a shower

2. Activities

Planning something you look forward to or even trying something new can be a great way to take your mind off a stressful day at work.

- Go for a walk
- Exercise
- Colouring in
- Phone a friend
- Walk to a new park
- Try a new recipe
- Plan something to look forward to
- Organise your photos
- Listen to a podcast
- Play a board game
- Do a Su Doku or crossword puzzle

3. Relaxation

Struggling to think of what helps you relax? Here are just a few of the common things people find helpful when trying to switch off.

- Yoga
- Meditation
- Read a book
- Calming breathing exercises
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Have a bath

Switching off routine template

Your switching off routine should be a combination of the tasks you need to get done and things you'd like to do and that help you relax. Use the template below to think about what the different aspects of your routine could be.

Things I have to do before work:

Things I have to do after work:

Things I find relaxing are...

I'd like to make more time to...

The best time of day to do this would be...

Wellbeing toolkit

This factsheet is part of our Wellbeing Toolkit aimed at helping teams stay well during the coronavirus outbreak.

Each week, a new pair of factsheets covering mental and physical wellbeing is released.

Take a look at westfieldhealth.com/covid-19 for access to all resources.