



Remote Working/ Studying

April 2022



Introduction

While one of the perks of remote working or studying is a flexible schedule, it can also affect the structure of our daily lives, and diminish the boundary between work and personal life – an imbalance between work and life can be detrimental to our work efficiency and also our quality of life.

This booklet includes tips and ideas to help you maintain a healthy work-life balance, and take care of your mental health at work:

- [Burnout](#)
- [Zoom fatigue](#)
- [Keeping peace with your roommate](#)

Burnout

The seemingly never-ending remote working guideline in place and the lack of balance between life and work can contribute to our feelings of prolonged stress. Without a healthy balance between work and life, social connections and proper stress management in place, it is likely that we will experience burnout - this is the state of emotional, physical and psychological exhaustion due to prolonged stress from work.



Signs of burnout

- Fatigued and tired all the time
- Headaches
- Feeling on edge or irritated
- Feeling trapped and helpless
- Loss of interest in activities
- Feels detached from the world
- Not wanting to meet friends or family



It is important to keep a healthy work-life balance, especially if remote working/studying is taking a toll on your mental health, and you are experiencing signs of burning out:

Keep a healthy work-life balance

Stick with a routine.

Routine gives us structure, keeps track of what we are doing, and provides us with a sense of accomplishment. Maintain your usual routine of getting ready, finishing work after regular hours, and scheduling some time for activities that bring you joy and pleasure.

Schedule breaks.

Remember to schedule breaks from time to time, especially when working or studying remotely. Take a 5-minute break every other hour, or after meetings, to get a cup of water, or to stretch and move your body.

Keep your lunch hour!

We are so used to sacrificing lunch hours to compensate for work. Having a proper lunch not only benefits our physical health, but it also gives us a chance to relax and take a break from work.

Set a to-do list.

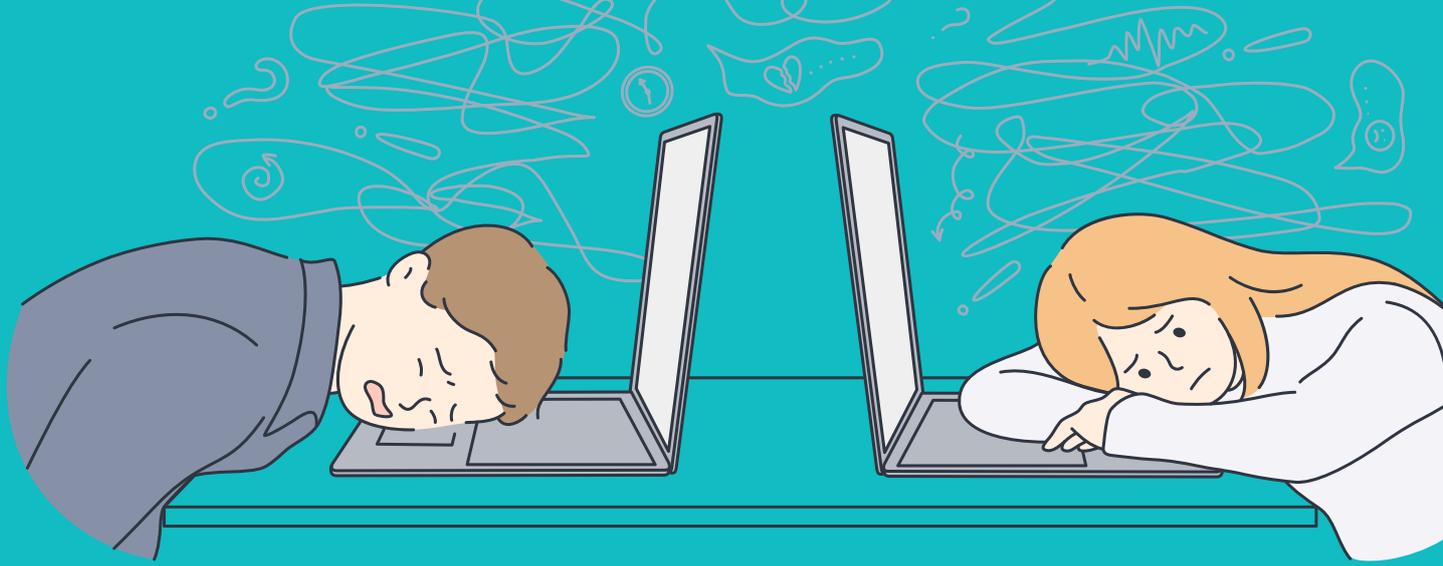
We might over-schedule tasks for ourselves when we think we have spare time, which sabotages our work-life balance. Try to set a to-do list for yourself and focus on three main tasks to work on each day.

Setting boundaries for yourself.

This includes setting a limit when checking and replying to emails and messages from colleagues within work hours, turning off notifications from work-related apps during off-hours and the weekend.

Use something to signal yourself to get off work.

Schedule a walk, grab a snack, or use dinner to signal the end of your work/school day.



Zoom fatigue

Since the pandemic, we have gotten used to video and zoom meetings - many of us were familiar with the feeling of zoom fatigue prior to the pandemic. Recent research has identified different factors that contribute to zoom fatigue, such as the increased amount of eye contact and decreased usual physical activity, all of which may contribute to the feeling of zoom fatigue. It affects our ability to concentrate on our work and our work efficiency.

It doesn't have to be a video call.

While it is nice to see your teammate's face, conducting meetings over a phone call allows us to take a break from overexposing ourselves to video meetings.

Hide or turn away from your self-view during video calls. Constantly seeing our own faces during meetings - when we talk, think, make decisions and interact with others - can be mentally taxing. We are also more likely to be more self-conscious as we attend to the negative details about ourselves.

Switch to a speaker view instead of a grid view.

Grid view allows you to view all participants at once, which can be overwhelming from time to time, as you are attending to many things simultaneously, which can overload your brain. Focusing on the speaker can minimise distractions and allow us to focus on one thing at a time.

Arrange walk meetings. Schedule in walk-meetings if possible, to make sure you stay active and match the mobility you had before the shift to working from home.



Keeping the peace with your roommate

You may find yourself having more conflict with people you live with; especially if you stay in a small space together, it can be frustrating. Times of high stress like these can significantly strain relationships and increase our stress levels.



- **Set up a work or study schedule**, if possible, to avoid conflicts. Set boundaries around work time and housework responsibilities, and respect each other's limits.
- **Put out a reminder in advance if you have meetings** to remind your roommates to lower their noise level or avoid scheduling meetings around the same time.
- **Let the small things go and pick your battles.** If you are ever in doubt, ask yourself, "will I care about this in 5 hours? Will I care about this tomorrow?"

About Mind HK

Mind HK (Mind Mental Health Hong Kong Limited) is a S88 registered charity (91/16471), which launched in 2017. Our vision is to ensure no one in Hong Kong has to face a mental health problem alone. Through resources, training, and outreach campaigns and programmes, we help to educate around mental health and remove the associate stigma, with the aim of achieving the best mental health for all in Hong Kong. With existing collaboration and research efforts, we are here to support Hong Kong in becoming a global leader and regional model for public mental health. For more on our work, mission and vision, please visit www.mind.org.hk.

Useful Resources

If you want to learn more about other mental health topics, please visit **our**

Mental Health A to Z:

www.mind.org.hk/mental-health-a-to-z/

COVID-19 Mental Health Information Hub:

Mental health resources and local supports available to take care of your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic

mind.org.hk/covid-information-hub

If you are in an emergency or crisis situation, please contact 999, or go to your nearest A&E.

More local urgent support in Hong Kong:

mind.org.hk/find-help-now

More non-urgent support can be found here:

mind.org.hk/community-directory/

How & where to seek help in Hong Kong:

mind.org.hk/getting-help/



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