



Hello. We Hope this Newsletter finds you doing well.

Working at Home.....

With Executive Order 2020-21 issued by the Governor that took effect on March 24th, many of us find ourselves in a new work environment, our homes.

This is the place we feel most safe, the most comfortable and the most secure. And while this is true, we cannot ignore safety exposures that come from working at home.

For most, working at home means being on a computer, laptop, cell phone, telephone, iPad, Kindle or any other electronic device connecting us to the outside world. This work involves sitting in chairs, at desks or tables, or for some on a recliner, couch, or even working in bed. All of which can place strains on muscles, tendons, ligaments and body joints. Some more than others.

This newsletter will focus on helping us keep safe, lessen stress, and stay productive while we work at home.

The first thing we need to do is maintain regular hours. While working at home gives us some flexibility, the last thing we should be doing is working crazy hours that find us working at 2am instead of sleeping. Getting out of our normal work routine is the first step to losing the work-life balance when working from home. So, maintaining regular work hours as best as possible starts with keeping our morning routine. Getting up at the same time as usual keeps that morning routine.

For some of us, that's taking a shower, having a cup of coffee, eating breakfast, stretching and exercise, or reading the newspaper. Keep this routine.

One perk everyone who starts working from home instantly thinks about is being able to work in our pajamas. For most, this is a bad strategy. We think how nice to sleep in, get up and jump right into work. This is not a good plan.

Be comfortable but change clothes. It can be baggy pants and a cozy shirt, but change clothes. A normal routine that includes getting out of our sleepwear can be more powerful than our clocks, cellphones, and computers when it comes to getting started and being productive each workday.

Next, set rules for working at home with others who are home too. This would be creating your own workspace, not being interrupted, not doing house chores, and minimizing distractions.

The first rule to minimizing distractions is ***KEEP THE TELEVISION OFF***, or be in a different part of the house from where the TV is. Not only so you cannot see it, but also so you cannot hear it. It only takes the echo of, "C'mon on down, you're the next contestant on the Price Is Right," before you find yourself in the daily routine of watching a game show for an hour and thinking to yourself, "Dang it, I could win a car every time if I could get on that show." In all seriousness, it's so important to separate yourself as far away as possible from the TV. This will minimize negative effects on production. Make sure your family fully understands you need your space.

Next, make sure you stay in contact with your coworkers. Even if what you are working on is individual work or assignments, take the time to reach out to your colleagues. Starting the day with a "Good Morning" email or a quick phone call keeps us in touch with the real world out there. For some, the first emotions we'll feel at home are that of loneliness, isolation, and disconnect from our coworkers, who in many cases are our friends. We'll soon notice we miss their faces, the stories, the socializing, and the feeling of being amongst them. Messaging apps, emails, texts are great ways to take a brief moment to socialize. But please make sure to avoid the pitfalls of reaching out to someone who may be a long-winded emailer or texter. Have a plan in place to make sure the socializing is just an opportunity to take a break to communicate. Start your text or email with, "Hello, just thought I'd take a quick moment to say hi and see how things are going on your end." A few back and forth replies usually is enough to have an impact and make us feel in touch.

Another thing we want to keep in mind when creating our workspace is to find an area of our home with natural light. Windows that let in sunshine have wonderful effects on our attitude, happiness and lessens stress. With that said, please make sure sunlight does not cause any issues with glare on our computers and monitors, and does not shine directly into our eyes.

Ok, now we need to address the exposures on our bodies. This is the ergonomics side of the equation. This is the part where we establish control measures that minimize strains and stresses on the body, muscles, tendons, and ligaments.

It all starts with the chair and sitting. And yes, we mean a chair. A piece of furniture that has you sitting upright. Not a recliner, couch

or bed, or on the floor putting your neck, back, and shoulders in awkward positions.

These are postures we don't want to be working in:



Stress and over-exertion on shoulders and knees

If possible, use a laptop computer docking station with external keyboard and monitor.

It all starts with a chair!

Make sure your chair allows you sit up straight. Ideally it should have a back that provides lumbar support. If your chair is a straight back with a big seat base that has a gap between your back and the chair back, use a pillow or cushion to provide support.

Next, make sure the table or desk is at a good working height. If this is your workspace at home, it's not going to go well:



Ouch!

Ideally, we want to be sitting straight up, feet on the floor with head, neck, shoulders, arms, wrists, and back all in neutral positions.

This is the posture we are shooting for:



Yes!

If you are using a telephone or cellphone, if possible, use the speaker. If you cannot, do not hold the phone in place with your head and shoulder. This can cause strain and over-exertion on the neck, upper back and shoulders:



Don't be this guy!

Computer Workstation Ergonomics Checklist

Use a checklist as a guide to determine the best and most comfortable setup for you.

The *COMPUTER WORKSTATION ERGONOMICS SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST* published by the National Institute of Health is an excellent resource:

<https://www.ors.od.nih.gov/sr/dohs/Documents/Computer%20Workstation%20Ergonomics%20Self%20Assessment%20Checklist.pdf>

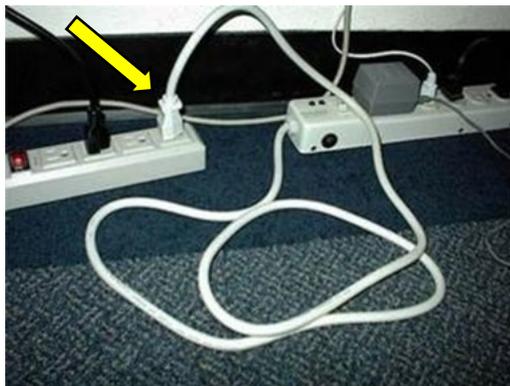
Also make sure the area you select to setup your workstation has enough room and space for you to spread out your work and not be confined or cramped. Your workspace should have enough surface area to comfortably contain your computer setup, cellphone or telephone, documents, and your printer (if you are using one).

If you will take part in online face-to-face meetings, such as Skype, Zoom, FaceTime, make sure you have an appropriate background décor. This is also another reason to start your day with a shower and get out of your pajamas.

Other safety tips and suggestions for working at home include:

- As at the office, take mini breaks to stretch muscles and relieve eyestrain. On your regular breaks go for a short walk around the house, or even better outside. Just being outside for 5 minutes allows us to intake fresh air and refocus.
- Keep floors clear and free of hazards, especially trip hazards such as cords and cables.
- Keep office space neat and clear of combustibles.
- Make sure you have adequate electrical power available and electrical cords, plugs, and outlets are in good condition.
- Do not over-load outlets and do not daisy chain power strips. Meaning do not plug one power strip into another.

These Are No No's



Organization, Management & Piece of Mind

As much as possible, try to maintain the same schedule you did while working in your office. It will take time and effort to get accustomed to your new work environment, so be patient and relax. As with anything, it will take time to get used to change.

Prioritize your tasks and assignments at the beginning of each workday and set goals and objectives for what you wish to accomplish and complete.

Remember, we are social beings and need communication. Stay in contact with your supervisors and work teams. As managers, we should set forth expectations with our employees with regards to work hours, availability, regular duties, and productivity. Have a plan for regular staff/team meetings. Video chats will have a better impact than an ordinary conference call.

One of the biggest challenges most of us will face, is that we will not be the only one at home. This is especially true if we have children. Even more so if they are young and need care and supervision. Develop plans that work around nap times if you need silence to make phone calls. If your day care or pre-school gives rewards such as fruits or snacks for good behavior, continue this routine. Children will definitely understand what's going on here.

On lunch breaks take children outside and let them run around and get fresh air. This is always a good recipe for an afternoon nap.

There is no doubt working from home with kids will be a tough chore. Offer fellow workers, friends and other parents words of encouragement.

America is tough, we are strong, our workers are resilient, and we will concur!

Cyber Security

When it comes to cyber security, be aware and alert for phishing and malware attacks. These types of scams are escalating with the Coronavirus/COVID-19 outbreak. Follow your company's cyber policies and report any suspicious activity, information or emails to your IT personnel immediately. Also, keep in mind your home internet and cyber system can be much more vulnerable to an attack than at your office. Therefore, it is important to ensure your home WiFi system and internet connections are adequately secured with strong password and firewalls, and only authorized users have access. Unless specifically authorized by your company, do not use personal computers or other devices as a back door into your company's system.



REMEMBER.....



No!



No!

Keep regular hours and to prevent fatigue and musculoskeletal discomfort, do not use a couch, lounge chair, coffee table, snack table, bed or floor for work activities. These surfaces are not conducive to creating a stable and productive work environment.

P.O. Box 505, Novi, MI 48376 Phone 248-344-8550, Fax 248-344-8560
www.crsmi.com

LOSS CONTROL AND SAFETY IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF YOUR MANAGEMENT. THE RECOMMENDATION(S) AND CONTENTS OF THIS MATERIAL ARE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. THIS MATERIAL DOES NOT LAY CLAIM TO ADDRESS EVERY POSSIBLE LEGAL OBLIGATION, HAZARD, CODE VIOLATION, LOSS POTENTIAL OR EXCEPTION TO GOOD PRACTICE. IT SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS INDICATING THE EXISTENCE OR AVAILABILITY OF ANY INSURANCE COVERAGE. COMPREHENSIVE RISK SERVICES SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIMS ANY WARRANTY OR REPRESENTATION THAT COMPLIANCE WITH ANY ADVICE CONTAINED HEREIN WILL MAKE ANY PREMISES, PROPERTY OR OPERATION SAFE OR IN COMPLIANCE WITH ANY LAW OR REGULATION.