



Beating Post-Cubicle Blues

by [Christine Gilbert](#) / Feb 16

You finally did it. You've been working on your boss for months now, presenting detailed reasons why working remotely not only makes sense but will boost your productivity. You're sitting at your kitchen table or at café anywhere in the world with your laptop, strong wifi and stronger coffee. You're ready to go. Then it hits you— something's missing, but you're not sure what.

While your counterparts back at the office would never believe this, there are some downsides to working remote 100 percent of the time. It can be lonely, if you've spent most of your adult life— at least during the workday, with coworkers. You can feel isolated and "out of the loop" when you don't have the same hallway meetings and informal lunches. And in the beginning it can feel frustrating and overwhelming, especially if the rest of your team still works together.

Here are some tips I've learned along the way to negotiate these "choppy" waters.

1. Get out there. Working from home doesn't have to be from home. Setting up camp at your local café, bookshop or restaurant (as long as they have a good wifi connection) can jolt you out of the remote worker doldrums. Being around other people and in public can be a refreshing change if you're struggling with sitting in your quiet house all day.



2. Get support. When you worked in an office, you had a built-in support network. A sounding board was usually no further than over your cubicle wall. On the outside, you might find this sudden vacuum daunting, but that just means you'll have to find and create your own support network. Maintain relationships with coworkers you trust. Find other folks who work remotely to hash out your frustrations.

3. Get connected. One of the biggest complaints I hear in the first weeks and months is that folks newly remote, feel out of the loop. There is a context that you miss, from being remote, and while this may be a good thing (yay, no more office gossip), it can feel isolating when everyone else on your team is privy to discussions deemed "not important enough" to warrant calling you.

4. Use your free-time well. You might have hoped that working outside of the office would improve your work-life balance, but be careful not to give into the temptation to overwork. You're working from home, take advantage of it! If the only thing that changes in your new work situation is that you have avoided the daily commute, you're missing out on many of the side benefits. Use that commute-free time for things you never could have squeezed in before — an hour of personal time to explore your interests.

5. Get dressed. The first week you're going to love sitting in your pjs, un-showered, sipping coffee while you check your e-mail from the living room sofa. After that, it just gets depressing. Starting your day as if you are going somewhere, setting up a proper desk, and having regular hours are all little details that seem innocuous enough but make a huge difference in how you feel through out the day.

6. Set boundaries. If you had your laptop on your lap during the last episode of Lost, it's time to set some rules for yourself about online vs. offline time. Not only that, if you make yourself available 24/7 because you've now blurred the work/home line, this will become expected. Follow your company's culture. Just because you're working remotely, doesn't mean you should be answering e-mail three hours after everyone else left the office. The rest of your team is unplugging, so can you.

7. Enjoy it. You're free! Understand that this will be an adjustment, but that in the long run, this is exactly what you wanted. Remember why you're doing this, so that when you hear someone complain about the killer commute, you can laugh and say, "Thankfully I don't have to deal with that anymore."

Do you have other tips to share with your peers? Let them hear them below.

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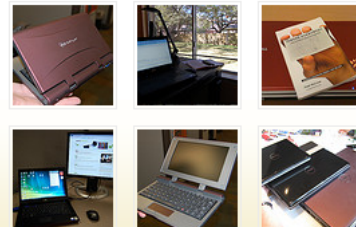
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