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Balancing Working from Home and Caregiving Responsibilities

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For many across the country, working from home is their new reality for the foreseeable future as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread rapidly. For some, this arrangement is business as usual. But for others, including parents and caregivers, they now face the difficult task of balancing their working from home and caregiving responsibilities.

If you're in this situation, it may be difficult to navigate. Use the strategies outlined below to help you manage your telecommuting and caregiving responsibilities.

Set a Schedule

Humans crave structure, regardless of whether they're working in the office or at home. As such, while you're working from home, it's important to create a schedule and stick to it. For example, if you're used to going to the gym before work, try to wake up early and get an at-home workout in before you start your workday from home.

Setting a schedule for yourself is just as important as setting one for those whom you're looking after at home. If you have children at home, try to mirror their school schedule as

much as possible. For example, have them wake up at the same time that they would for school, eat breakfast and get ready. Then, have them work on activities for specific times, building in time for meals and going outside.

For other loved ones you may be caring for, try to incorporate their standard routine with your personal schedule. Consider eating meals together and taking breaks to go for a walk outside or spend time together.

Create Separate Spaces

When you're working from home, it's important that you create separate spaces for yourself and those you're looking after.

Ideally, your at-home workstation would be at a desk or table, away from any distractions such as the TV. Trying to work from your bed or couch can be challenging, since such locations are associated with sleep and relaxation. Creating this separation will benefit your productivity as well as your mental well-being.

Not only will this help you remain productive at work, but it will also help communicate to others that when you're in your workspace, you're working. Additionally, creating these

separate spaces will further instill the schedule that you set.

Take Breaks

Just because you're working from home doesn't mean you can't take breaks. Coordinate all of the schedules so that you can take a break with your loved ones at the same time. Consider getting outside to get some fresh air and exercise.

Make sure to stand up and distance yourself from your at-home workstation. It's extremely important for your mental well-being to maintain physical separation between your work and home life while you're working at home.

Communication Is Key

When you're balancing your job and caregiving responsibilities, it's important that you communicate with those you're looking after. It's also important that you're honest about your situation with managers and co-workers. Doing so will help ensure that expectations can be properly set and managed during the time you're working from home.