

Does your morning commute seem less congested these days? Stepping over the dog and navigating your kids' toys strewn across the carpet is far more manageable than bumper-to-bumper traffic, right? If a home office is your new normal, you're not alone. According to a recent study of 800 global human resource executives, 88% of organizations have encouraged or required their employees to work from home. <https://businessfacilities.com/2020/03/most-employees-working-from-home-due-to-coronavirus-pandemic/>

It doesn't look as if things will be changing anytime soon. The list of major companies announcing that employees can solely [work from home](#) until at least 2021 due to concerns about the [COVID-19 pandemic](#) remains small, but the number is likely to rise. In recent research conducted by the [Society for Human Resources Management](#) (SHRM), about 17% of the HR leaders in some 2,284 US companies reported their organizations will move to permanent work-from-home policies in the future for their employees. <https://www.techrepublic.com/article/more-companies-likely-to-keep-employees-working-from-home-until-2021-due-to-covid-19/>

As a virtual exec search firm, we've tackled the ins and outs of telecommuting since our inception in 2007, we've learned a thing or two... So, here's a look at the good and the bad for employees and leaders...

## **The Good of Telecommuting**

Smartphones and mobile platforms have empowered professionals to take their job "on the go". While we are currently limited to our homes, the community as a whole has embraced the mobile workforce by making free wifi and workstations commonplace in restaurants, coffee shops, and rent by the hour office space. This is making working from home so enjoyable that [70% of telecommuters](#) said they would not [move companies for an increase in pay](#). (FYI: only 60% of brick and mortar employees feel the same.)

In the recent months, working from home has evolved even more. Employees from all industries have been forced to work from home and many embraced the flexible schedule, eliminating a long commute, and working in their pajamas. Using a few simple-to-institute tips and tricks and establishing work/life boundaries, most found they could do their job just as well, if not better. <https://turningpointexecsearch.com/blog/employers/remote-work-navigating-the-new-normal-part-1/>

Leaders have also settled nicely into the work from home model. Managing a team remotely isn't easy, but can be done successfully with a few tweaks. Increasing communication is one key to remote management. Here are a few more. <https://turningpointexecsearch.com/blog/employers/remote-work-navigating-a-new-normal-part-2/>

## **The Bad of Telecommuting**

Working from home isn't all fun and games, as many learned after a few weeks of juggling family and employees at the same time. ["Work is no longer somewhere you go from 9 to 5. It is something you do."](#) Subsequently, employees can "do" their job anywhere, including their homes, making it difficult to "clock out" and separate their work and professional lives. Many lack the self-discipline to clearly delineate and stick to set "work hours". 40% say they work longer hours and note a significant increase in stress while experiencing a decrease in time not thinking about work.

Working from home is also more likely to make you feel socially isolated and removed from the collaborative and team building culture found within many of today's organizations. The fact that most social outlets have also been restricted in recent months compounds these feelings. For employers, a sizeable mobile workforce makes accurately assessing performance challenging, making it difficult to provide relevant feedback, which can, in turn, negatively impact an employee's mobility within the company.

A few solutions:

Some of you may be returning to work slowly but surely over the next few weeks and months. Many of you will not. Here are a few solutions you can implement to tackle some of the downsides of telecommuting.

- [Create a routine and stick with it.](#) Organize your day as if you were working outside your home. Establish a consistent wake-up time. Organize your morning with a workout, walk with your dog, cup of coffee, etc. just as you would if you were making a morning commute.
- Schedule a lunch break and take regular breaks. (Actual breaks- not stepping away from your desk to do other chores around the house!) These go a long way toward keeping you focused and productive.
- Establish your “work hours” ahead of time and [communicate them to your team and managers.](#) Make it clear when you will and will not answer phone calls and emails- and make no (or only a few) exceptions!
- Avoid isolation. Incorporate video conferencing and Instant Messaging with your co-workers (and friends!) regularly. Schedule weekly or monthly office time when possible. Work in other locations outside your home, such as coffee shops and hourly workspaces.

Leaders..

- require “work hours” for all telecommuters and insist they share them with you. Then [honor and respect those hours!](#) Just as you wouldn’t chase them through the parking garage after hours, don’t harass them with late night phone calls and emails.
- facilitate video conferences regularly to connect your team. Do not simply organize them, [facilitate them](#) to ensure everyone gets the opportunity to speak and side conversations and decision making is shared with the group.
- Be open to spontaneous calls from your mobile team. Do not automatically send them to voicemail when you are in the middle of something. If they were knocking on your office door, you’d acknowledge them, invite them in, and address the issue at hand. Treat your telecommuting team members the same way.
- Keep the collaborative culture alive. Using Instant Messaging or in-office group chats allows your staff to share ideas and work together as a team.
- Provide your remote employees with the technology and tools they need to be successful. Remember, you are saving on overhead by giving your employees the option to work remotely. Use some of that savings to invest in their success.