

WAYS TO WORK SMARTER

Be mindful Even if you're not physically there, be present in your conversations with colleagues rather than talking while making lunch or walking to the shops. It will improve your performance and professional relationships.

Take breaks Actually get away from your work and sit somewhere else. It'll freshen you up ready to come back and work.

Make time for meeting up. If you work from home, arrange to meet face-to-face with your colleagues periodically. Social support is critical to our wellbeing.

Prioritise Make a list of everything you need to get done. Focus on the top three, and when they're done, move onto the next three.

Test things It takes three weeks to become comfortable in a new habit, such as a starting time or a different workspace, so give everything that's new at least 21 days.

“Make a weekly plan on a Sunday. Pay attention to your diurnal variation; are you a lark or an owl? Respect that, because it’s hard to change”

you want from your smart phone and make it your slave not your master,” she says. “I would turn off the noise that signals when you’ve got a text or email,” says Linda, “It’s been engineered to disrupt your attention.”

And our attention is very limited. “It’s well known that we can only do four hours of focused work a day,” says Linda. This sounds terrifying, but it means you can have realistic expectations of yourself. The think tank New Economics Foundation recommends a 21-hour working week to address low wellbeing, over-consumption, high carbon emissions and the lack of time to live sustainably, care for one another and enjoy life. However many hours you work you need to create a transition between work and life. Something that can help is creating a ‘corridor’ between the two – anything from meditating to walking the dog or changing your clothes.

Boundaries aren’t about staying rigidly work-focused; socialising is important, too. “It’s important to have

human contact,” explains Gail. “Email conversations are short and if people are busy they forget social niceties. Arrange to meet face-to-face periodically, it helps working relationships as well as your wellbeing.”

CAFÉ SOCIETY

Many people head to their local café to work in a more social environment but before you do it, consider your personality. “If you’re an introvert it may be distracting to be around other people; if you’re an extrovert it might be the only way to stimulate you,” explains Linda.

Thinking about other people you work with can also help. Jenny Biggam founded The 7 Stars media agency over a decade ago and was a trailblazer for flexibility, offering staff unlimited holidays, no job titles and the ability to set their own hours. She remains as conscious as ever about staff wellbeing: “If I’m working on a Sunday night I’ll save my emails as drafts and send them on Monday morning. That way I don’t pass on work thoughts to someone and interrupt their evening,” she says.

By its very definition, there isn’t a one-size-fits all solution to blended living and working. So experiment. Try new things. Be in control and see what works for you – and if happens to be wearing a wearing a silly hat for work, then who cares! ☺