



Top Tips for Agile Working

Introduction

2020 demonstrated that more jobs could be done on a remote basis than we ever thought possible. In effect we proved that technology meant that for so many of us our work could be done anywhere. But working in a more agile way away from the social supports and structures of the office environment can bring challenges as well as benefits. Like most things there are some Do's and Don'ts that make it work better. Here's some ideas to think about to help you get the best out of it.

1. The Basics: Plan your day:

It sounds pretty basic, but in order to stay on track, plan what you want to get out of the day. Consider having a "to-do" list, that way you can track your progress throughout the day.

2. Stay Social:

Social isolation is a real source of stress for agile workers. Check in with your co-workers regularly by either phone, email or other connections. Arrange to meet up virtually at least once a week for non-business topics, just to socialise and keep in touch. On the days that you are in the office, and always aim to be in the office at least once a week to keep in touch.

3. Use technology to its fullest:

Most technology environments have a range of useful tools to show times of availability, do not disturb etc. and are useful in organising your day. Consider setting up team groups to speed up the flow of communications, and add tips and observations to organisation help sites on ways to get things done. Use all technology to remain visible so resist the temptation to keep cameras turned off and instead use them as a way to participate more fully.

4. Catch up with your line manager:

It is useful to schedule regular catch up time with your line manager, this will help you keep in touch with what's going on across the team and help you both to manage your priorities. It also gives real focus for performance management discussions in relation to what's expected of you (outcomes) and support you need for delivery

5. Establish Boundaries to your day:

Set boundaries around your working hours and plan your work accordingly. It is best to structure your work as close as possible to the office working hours but accept that sometimes that mightn't be feasible or possible – so agree some general boundaries with your line manager. Break up the day by setting yourself deadlines to keep things on track and take a break after each major task is completed. If you need to plan your hours in a different way, remember your colleagues might be following different time patterns so be conscious of not interrupting others outside of core hours

6. Eat Well:

Try to avoid the natural temptation to break down into all day snacking. Sticking to good eating habits is important for a productive day. Maybe keep a bowl of fruit close by so you don't find yourself gravitating towards the kitchen.



7. Create a healthy work environment:

Do your best to make sure that your work environment at home works for you from a health and safety point of view. You should review workspace for things like lighting, ventilation and heat.

8. Avoid Cabin Fever – Get Out:

If you're working from home, plan time to leave the house and go for a walk. It's important to get some air, experience a different environment and take a break from work.

9. Resist the temptation to 'prove' you're working

Resist the temptation to send more mails, or to keep watch on the 'Green Lync' to prove you're working. Agile can often mean that you work at different times across the day – so don't feel guilty if you swap early morning working for a lunchtime school visit.

10. Finally: Go Home at Night:

Set start and end times, It's tempting to never really leave the office, because there's always one last thing to do. Learn to close the 'door' and walk away when your day is done