

## TACKLING THE CORONA VIRUS

– we're told “avoid crowds” and “WORK FROM HOME!”

Work from home - what could go wrong?

Working from home will now be the new normal, so it will be important for all people working from home - and their employers - to consider how they can do so and remain safe and healthy.

But most transmission of the virus occurs in the home!

Thousands – perhaps millions – of employees have been told to do their work from home. Google, Apple, Shopify, Amazon – all are asking (telling) their employees to work from home. Many schools will be closed for the next month – or more.

Sure, we want to avoid crowds and coming in contact with possible COVID19 carriers. Should we wear a mask? Looks good, so it's becoming something of a fashion statement. But if it's not worn properly so that it fits, a mask is next to useless, unless it stops you touching your lips and face.

At the best of times, there are many traps, pitfalls and challenges associated with working from home. Indeed, working from home may not be for everyone, COVID19 notwithstanding. But with the likelihood of a jump in the infection rate in Australia within the next few weeks, now is the time to consider what actions can be taken to limit its spread – and still get your work done.

Here are some tips to help you transition to working from home.

### DOING YOUR WORK

1. Maintain your normal work routines – get up at the same time, wear your normal work clothes.
2. Take the time and make the effort, to set up your home work station properly – and be comfortable; remember, you are at work. So preferably, designate a room with a door and when you are in there, you are at work.
3. Your children will be home also – their schools will be closed with the Term1 break certain to be extended. So, there are potential impacts on family relationships to consider, when Mum or Dad may be at home but, because they are ‘at work’, cannot be disturbed. Think through now about how you are going to cope.
4. Keep in contact with your work colleagues, customers and clients – except that now you might use Skype or WhatsApp – etc. Consider setting up a Facebook or WhatsApp chat group so you can liaise with your clients and team members; you can even set up a YouTube channel if you need to educate customers or staff (or subscribe to our Work Safety Channel ‘ [WorkSafetyHQ](#) ’).
5. Take the time and make the effort, to provide yourself with a decent workstation. That does not mean part of the kitchen table! Think about a proper desk, height-adjustable chair, good Screen Based Equipment, good lighting, etc.
6. Know when it's time to stop (that's hard when work might just be down the corridor); don't just sit at a desk all day, but get up, move around, go outside to get some sunlight and fresh air, have a walk in the park (but keep your distance from others – at least 2 metres).

You will find these and many other tips and suggestions in the “ [WORKING FROM HOME SAFETY HANDBOOK; An employee guide to working safely from home](#) ”. ( [www.worksafetyathome.com](http://www.worksafetyathome.com) )

**Working from Home will become the new normal for many people!** Working people will be experiencing it – and companies will be seeing the benefits. Now is the time to work out how to work from home **safely**.

## KEEPING HEALTHY

Even though you may be working from your home, there are still some important steps you need to take to avoid being infected by or transmitting the COVID19 virus, whether or not you manage to get out of your home?

So:

- wash your hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds. Alcohol based sanitiser is OK but not as good as soap and water, so save it for when you can't get use soap
- try to maintain "social distancing" of at least 2 metres from others. And avoid direct skin contact - no hugging, kissing or hand shaking
- try to avoid touching your face and mouth (this may be one benefit of wearing a mask)
- avoid touching things that others might have touched, such as door handles, handrails, auto-tellers and touch screens, and even cash; wearing hygienic gloves will help and if you must handle cash, wash your hands immediately after and certainly before handling food, touching you face or mouth, or other personal items.

## DOES WEARING A FACEMASK HELP?

The coronavirus outbreak has prompted people around the world to buy medical face masks in hopes of preventing infection.

Health experts say that such a move is probably effective in a city, where a person is more likely to come in contact with someone who is infected than in other parts of the world. But elsewhere, wearing face masks will not be that effective, experts say.

Health Authorities advise the best preventative measures include washing hands and covering coughs. There are two different kinds of face masks — surgical masks and N95 (or better) respirators — which are commonly worn by health care professionals and those who are already sick. See more at <https://buff.ly/2uRb9wk>

Author of the 'WORKING FROM HOME SAFETY HANDBOOK; An employee guide to working safely from home' Dr David McIvor (CEO of Work Safety Pty Limited) has been interviewed by Dianne 'Dee Dee' Dunleavy on Melbourne Radio 3AW, on the impact of the corona virus (COVID-19) on working life. You can hear the interview [HERE](#).

Hear David McIvor's recent interview on Melbourne Radio 3AW chatting about how to make 'working from home' successful



For information on the Working From Home Safety Handbook [CLICK HERE](#)