

# Work at home

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# Home office is an oasis

- ▶ Many people dream about being able to work at home. They imagine themselves in their immaculate home office zipping through tasks while sipping a cappuccino (or herbal tea), savoring their new unparalleled efficiency.
- ▶ After all, compared to the standard office, a home office is an oasis, and who wouldn't get more done if they didn't have to work surrounded by noise and constant interruption, and have to waste time attending useless meetings?



# Some facts

- ▶ The good news is that the number of meetings a person who works at home has to attend goes way down. The bad news is that there are still plenty of distractions and time wasters to contend with when you work at home.

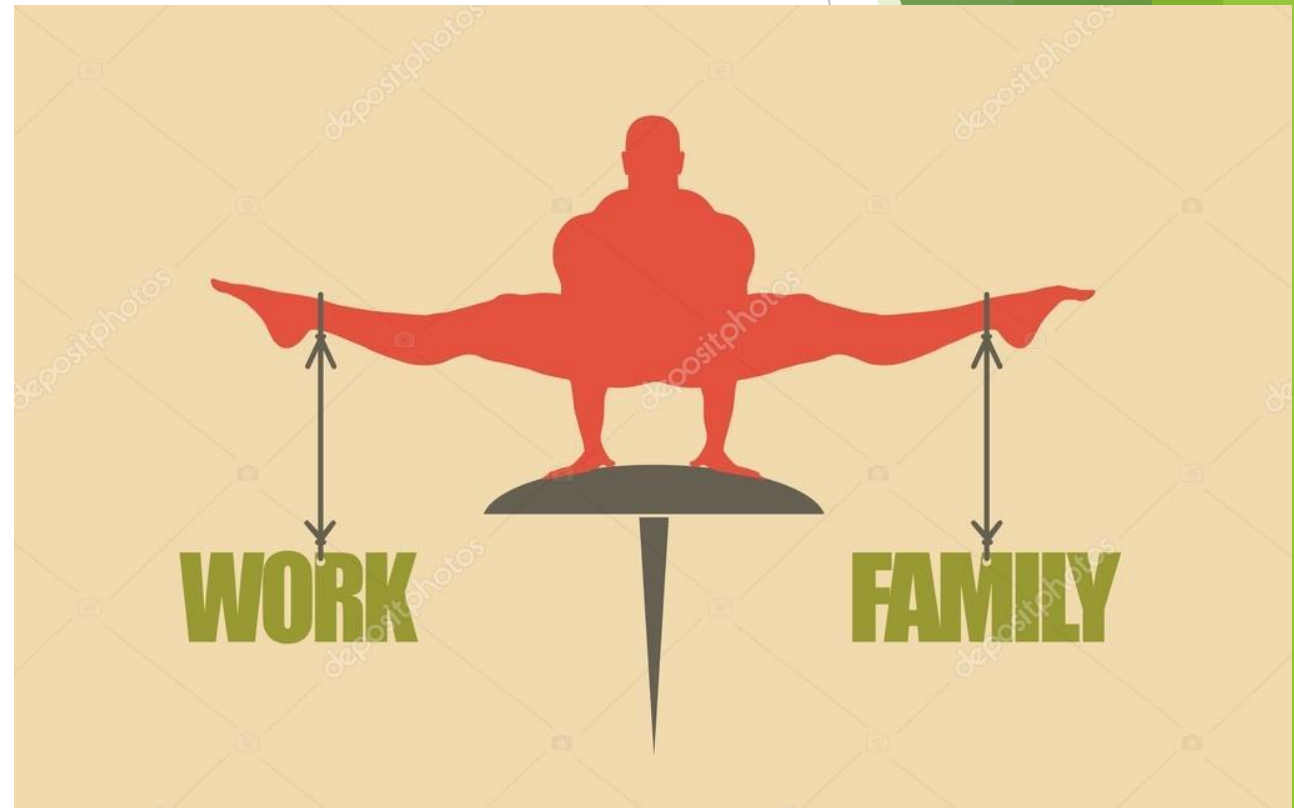
A worldwide survey by Regus of 24,000 workers from over 95 countries revealed some interesting statistics about the disadvantages of working from home.



# Work Life Versus Family Life

- ▶ 60% of respondents reported that children or family demanding attention was the number one issue when working at home. If you have a family it is important to let them know when you are working and therefore unavailable.

Having a fully equipped office in a separate room in the house (so you can shut the door when necessary) is vital. Note also that your home office is not necessarily a suitable place for small children and pets to play.



# Concentration

- ▶ Difficulty concentrating on work issues was the second biggest problem, reported by 45% of those surveyed. Concentration killers include everything from noise from family or neighborhood activities to just observing that beautiful view of your backyard from your home office window.

Other people may have a hard time accepting the fact that you're actually working at home (or trying to). Besides the usual doorbell ringers, such as salespeople and people collecting for charities, well-meaning neighbors tend to pop by, assuming that you have time to chat as you haven't driven off anywhere to go to work. And then there's the telephone. You'll find that getting people to call you during your non-working hours rather than in prime time is a bit of a challenge.



- ▶ Another disadvantage of working from home is that you have to motivate and organize yourself. No one's going to pop by your home office and tell you to get on with things. And unless you're really skilled at staying on task, you may find yourself succumbing to temptation more easily when you work at home. Think about it. What's more appealing, making yet another sales call or playing with your child?



# Business Phone Interruptions

- ▶ Children, family, and pets disturbing work telephone calls was reported by 40% of respondents. Almost everyone who has spent substantial time working from home has experienced this issue. There is nothing like stepping on the cat's tail while on a conference call or having your three-year-old let out a bloodcurdling shriek while you are on the phone explaining to your boss how productive your day has been.



# Lack of Office Equipment

- ▶ No access to office equipment was reported by 33% of survey participants as a work from home disadvantage. If your work involves the use of specialized equipment it may be difficult to replicate this environment at home. Even with today's inexpensive prices for electronic equipment, a high-end laptop or tower computer with multiple monitors and a high-speed multifunction printer/fax machine/copier can set you back some serious money.





# Household Noise

- ▶ Household noises such as washing machine, dishwasher, etc. was reported as a problem by 30% of those working from home. In a separate category, TV noise was reported by 25% of those polled. Following the basics of good small or home office design will alleviate many of these problems. But if your home has poor sound insulation or your home office cannot be isolated from sources of noise (such as being on another floor of the house) this will be an ongoing issue unless you can negotiate with your family about having some or all of these activities take place outside your working hours.



# Access to Documents

- ▶ No access to sensitive company documents was reported by 25% of respondents. If the documents are in paper-only form then frequent visits to the company office may be required. For electronic documents, it will be necessary to investigate ways of accessing documents safely over the internet, such as Virtual Private Networks (VPN) or secure cloud access.



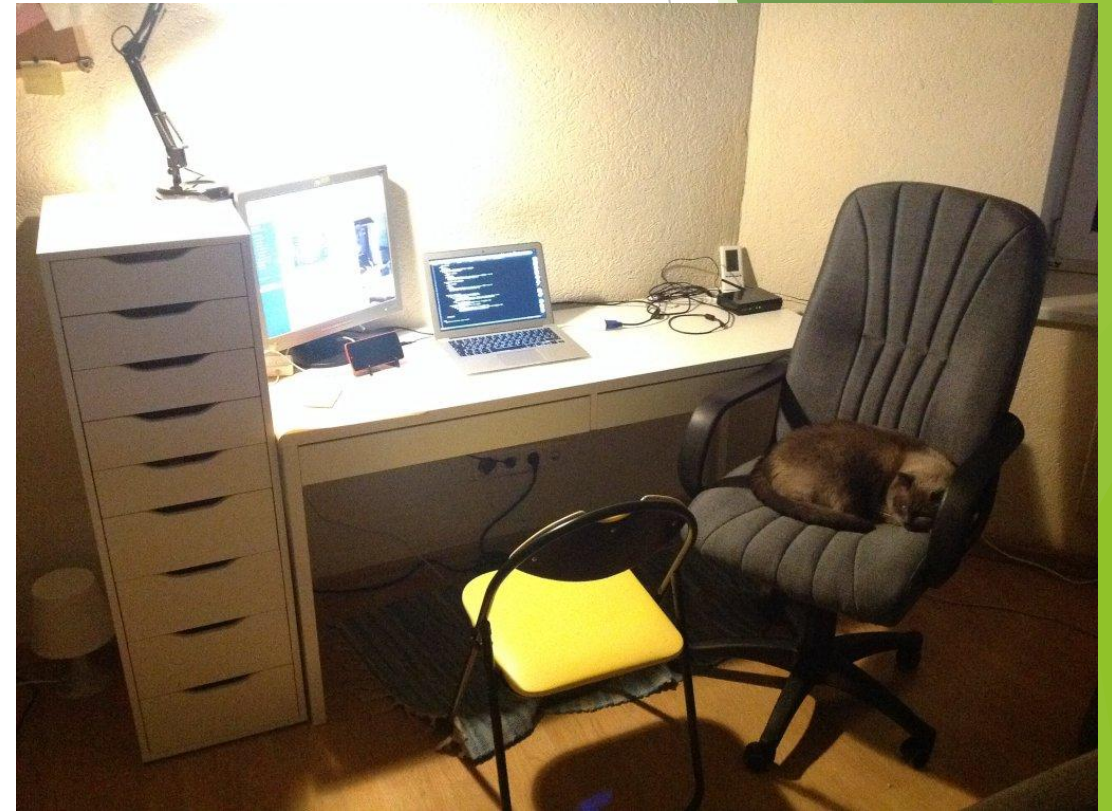
# Ergonomic Issues

- ▶ Lack of proper work surfaces was reported by 25% of those surveyed, and bad posture was reported by 23%. Neither of these should be an issue with a properly equipped home office. Without a proper desk and decent office chair your back, neck, and shoulders will eventually suffer.
- ▶ There is also the temptation to slouch or put your feet up on the desk for extended periods of time because there is no one looking over your shoulder. It is nice that you can do this while working at home, but bad posture will inevitably lead to visits to the physiotherapist and/or chiropractor.



# Getting Around the Disadvantages of Working From Home

- ▶ The results of the survey are self-evident: if you're going to work at home, rather than just be at home, you need to create an environment that will allow you to operate in a business-like manner. This includes having a properly equipped home office and organizing your work schedule in ways that will discourage others from interrupting you and keep you motivated when you're working at home.



Thanks for attention!