Tips and Tricks

Working from Home

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1

Select a space based on your needs.

The home office serves a great purpose, but it isn't for everybody all the time. Would you like to fuel your creativity or do you prefer a quiet environment for crunching numbers? You may find yourself curled up on the sofa one day and at the dining table the next, depending on the project. Determine how you usually divide your day. For example, are you more creative in the morning? You may spend that time writing or brainstorming ideas for your latest project. The afternoons then could be a more relaxed time spent sitting on the sofa, sifting through emails and completing the rest of your tasks for the workday.
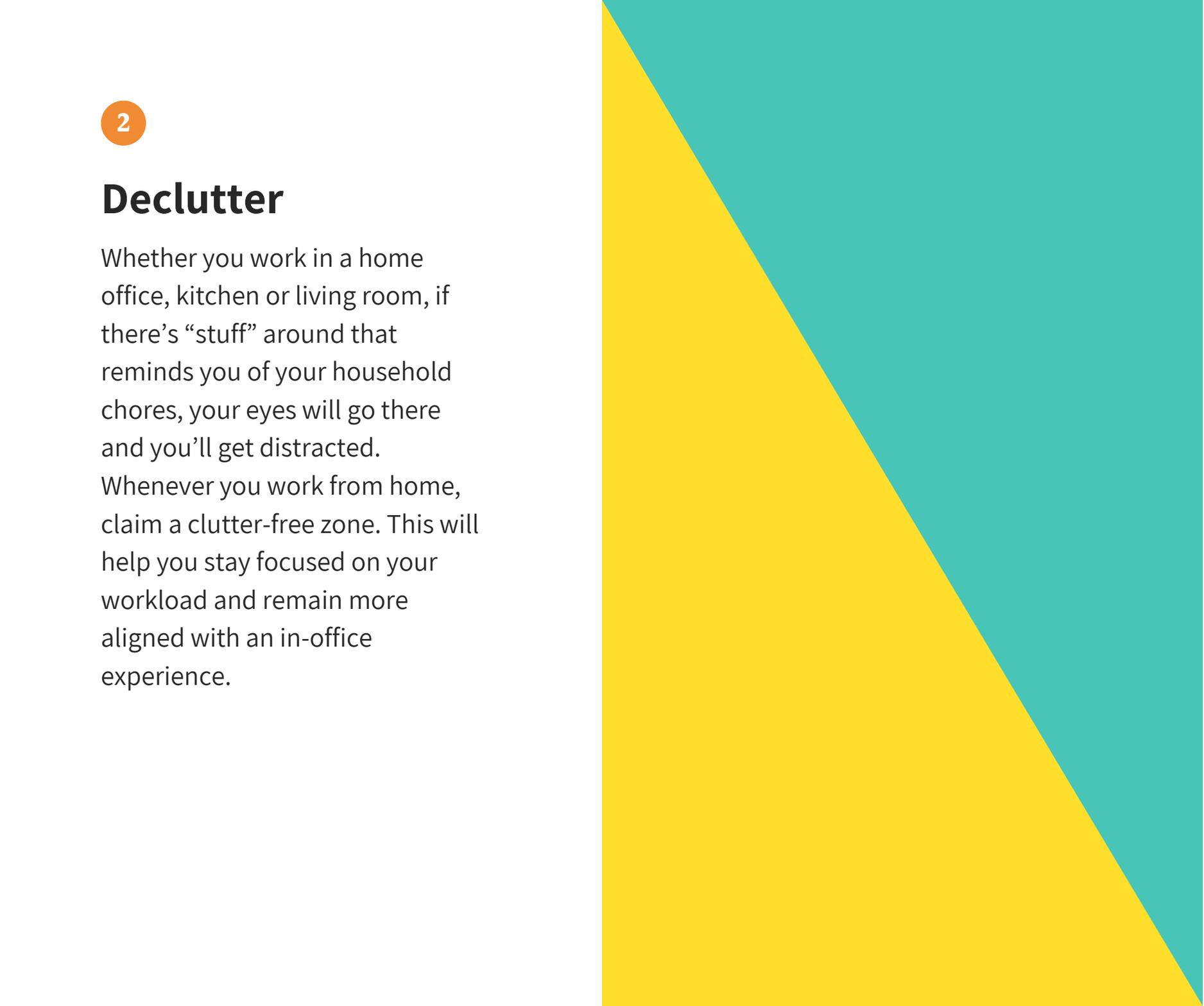
2

Declutter

Whether you work in a home office, kitchen or living room, if there's "stuff" around that reminds you of your household chores, your eyes will go there and you'll get distracted. Whenever you work from home, claim a clutter-free zone. This will help you stay focused on your workload and remain more aligned with an in-office experience.
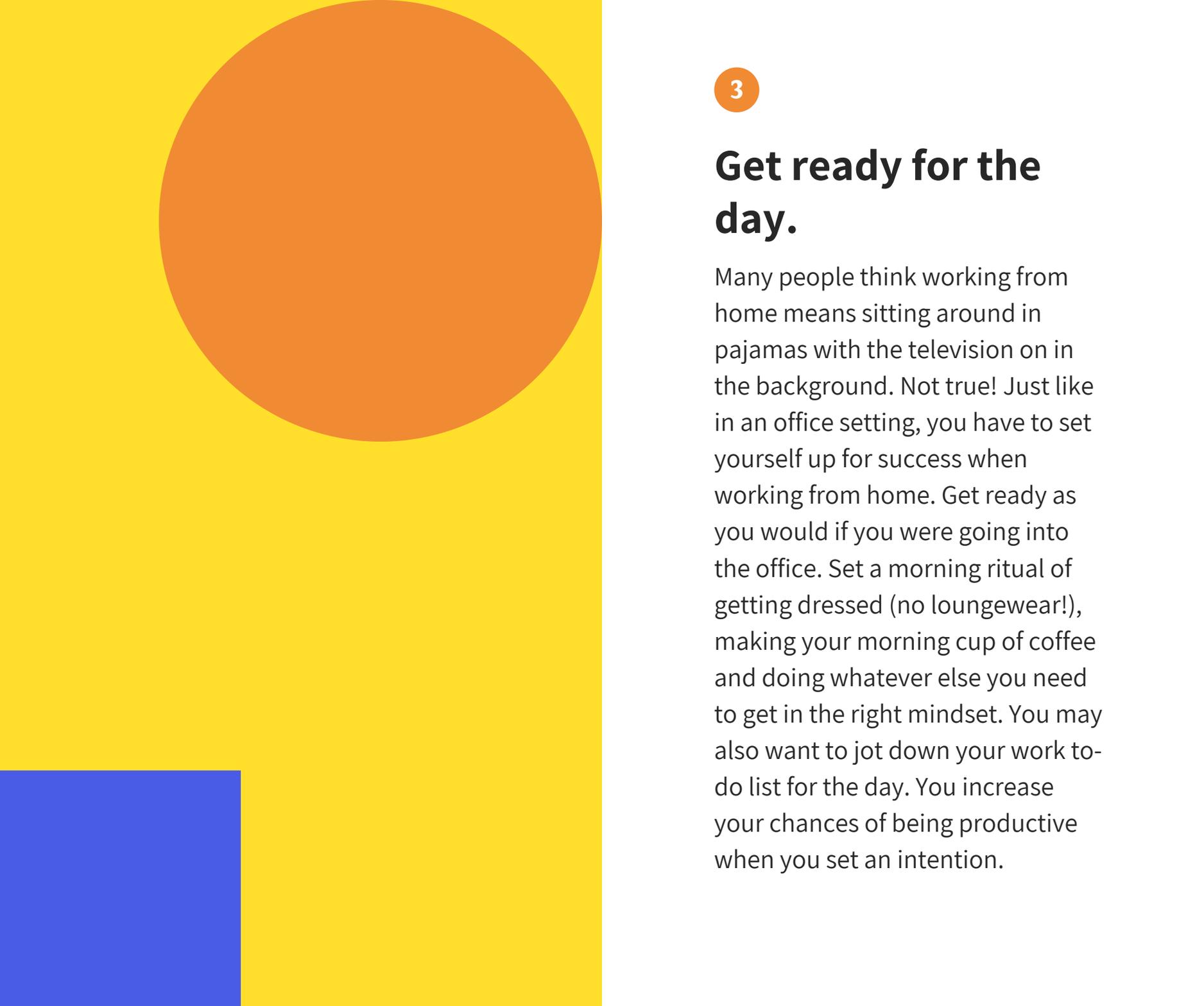
Get ready for the day.

Many people think working from home means sitting around in pajamas with the television on in the background. Not true! Just like in an office setting, you have to set yourself up for success when working from home. Get ready as you would if you were going into the office. Set a morning ritual of getting dressed (no loungewear!), making your morning cup of coffee and doing whatever else you need to get in the right mindset. You may also want to jot down your work to-do list for the day. You increase your chances of being productive when you set an intention.

Put yourself in a good position.

Some people find it easy to work in bed or on the sofa. In either case, if you're not sitting at a table, make sure you've got a small one within easy reach. You might not have a host of paperwork strewn out in front of you, but you will benefit from having the space to set a glass of water and your phone. Coffee tables and side tables fit the bill for any time you need extra space. You can also use a c-table to prop your laptop up to eye level and reduce strain on your neck. In addition to finding a surface space, you'll also want to make sure to keep your posture in check. Prop yourself up with a few throw pillows to help maintain proper body alignment.
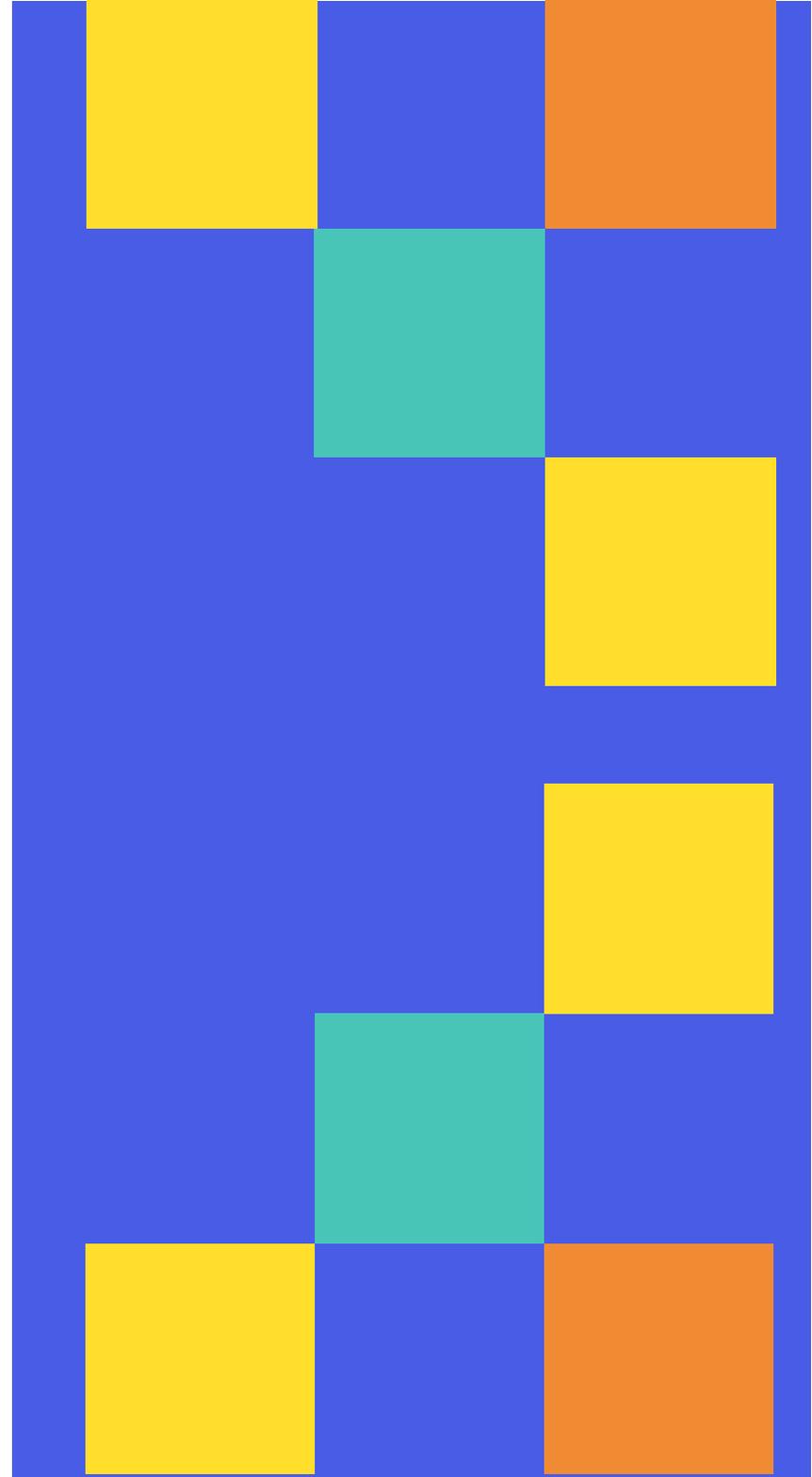
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Turn on the lights.

Natural light through the windows can be lovely, but it can also cause glare on your computer screen. If windows work to your benefit and the view isn't distracting, great. If not, pull the blinds and flip on the light switch. Table lamps and floor lamps provide targeted task light if your space has insufficient overhead lighting.

6

Create a home office ambiance.

One of the perks of working from home is being able to create a personalized work area in a way you may not be able to at the office. It's all about creating a cozy yet productive space that is perfectly suited to your individual working style. Add elements that promote a calming or inspiring environment, such as houseplants, task lighting, candles or your favorite decorative elements.

7

Set your schedule.

No matter if you work from home sporadically, a few days a week or all the time, you'll need to plan out your daily schedule. Establish your start time, midday break periods and what time you'll clock out for the day. This will keep you on track with your workload. It also sends the message to your co-workers that you have a relatively set schedule—just like you would in the office.

8

Get out.

While working from your sofa can be great most of the time, sometimes you need to break up the day. Take a 10-minute walk around the block to freshen up and to encourage the flow of new ideas. Looking for a change of scenery? Head over to your local coffee shop or library to work there for a few hours as it fits into your schedule. Or, if you know others who work from home, invite them over for an informal co-working group. This will not only help you get closer to the in-office experience, but it can also be a substitute for watercooler chats and workplace socializing.

9

Log off!

One of the most important aspects of a healthy work-from-home routine is creating boundaries. Lof off for the day—and not just from your laptop. Consider developing a phrase you say to yourself at the end of the day, to signal your mind that it's time to stop thinking about work. Have a last-minute idea come up after office hours? Jot it down, but come back to it tomorrow. Just because you have access to work anytime doesn't mean you should be logged in 24/7. Allow yourself to have downtime to create a work-life balance—we all need it, no matter where we are working.