



## Tips: Supporting Teleworking Employees During the Pandemic

In the blink of an eye, millions of employees have become full-time teleworkers due to the COVID-19 pandemic. And if that wasn't disruptive enough, many have simultaneously landed new positions as schoolteacher for their children and caregiver to little ones and older relatives. Outsourcing is no longer a viable household business strategy. How we understood teleworking before COVID-19 and previous tips to help improve employee well-being don't necessarily apply anymore. During this time of stress and uncertainty, how can employers and managers support the well-being of teleworking employees?

- **1 | Stay Connected:**

Promote investing extra time at the beginning of meetings to make sure people can connect to one another, as well as to the meeting's purpose. Spending the extra effort to connect interpersonally is vital for building social connection and trust, while connecting around the purpose helps attendees focus on the task at hand. Urge managers to regularly check in with employees to keep a pulse on the morale of their team, and remember to highlight and celebrate successes through emails, phone calls and group chats.

- **2 | Establish and Maintain Daily Habits:**

A routine can offer a needed sense of normalcy. Encourage employees to schedule breaks and use calendar alarms to stand and move, or to relax and recharge, throughout the day; create separate work and home spaces to reinforce work/life boundaries; and decide on a way to signify the transition away from work at the end of the day. Most importantly, remind employees to be flexible and have empathy for themselves and their colleagues.

- **3 | Appreciate the Financial Impact:**

Teleworking typically saves employees money, but now, due to COVID-19 many families are experiencing intense short- and long-term financial instability. When considering how to support financial well-being, make sure to focus your efforts on action instead of education (e.g., developing a new budget or focusing more on building short-term savings).

- **4 | Don't Forget About Physical Health:**

Find ways to transition your wellness activities to a virtual world. For example, offer a virtual fitness challenge, access to fitness apps or a subsidy to purchase fitness equipment or virtual fitness classes. You can also offer virtual ergonomic assessments of telework spaces and educate teleworkers about ergonomics through online trainings and resources, such as a safety checklist ([U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Telework Safety Checklist](#)).

Your employees are experiencing an incredible amount of rapid and confusing change right now. One thing that you can do to help is to reaffirm the overriding *purpose* of their role in the company and the values behind their efforts. Beyond just daily work objectives, purpose is the "why" employees care about the work they do. In a moment of unprecedented uncertainty, clarifying a purpose acts as a guiding light for employees as they weather the storm.

For more employer resources on managing the pandemic, visit our [COVID-19 Resource Page](#).

\*article courtesy of Business Health Group