Maintaining a Mindset When Working from Home.

Many of you won't know this but I've been working with team TICL now for over 4 years and in all that time I have always worked from home.

I understand that it doesn't suit everyone but for me, I can't think of nothing better than being in my home environment on a day to day basis. That being said, I really have to make sure I follow a few of my own basic rules…..

Maintain a Daily Routine – I will be totally honest, I am definitely a morning person. I'm always up at a fairly decent time, get hubby and teenage son off to school and I'm ready to go. I find I am way more productive in the mornings than in the afternoons. Once I'm up, the radios on and on with it I get. We are not all morning people but know your time strengths and weaknesses is a great help to planning a productive day.

Take regular breaks – the best thing about working from home? I think so, I can peg the washing out while making a cuppa! But seriously, it can get really easy to just stay sat at your desk and before you know it 3 or 4 hours have gone by and you haven't moved (not necessarily good for the back either!).

Background noise (happy music) – This is a must for me. Even before 'lockdown' and, when you are the only person at home, background noise is essential. If you have a particular playlist you love listening to and that makes you feel awake and alive then all the better. For me it's the 70's & 80's (showing my age now) and quite often find myself breaking into song while I work – unfortunately for the neighbours.

Answer Emails in batches – All the best reads say that this is a good practice to get into – I'm not good at this. I like to deal with emails as and when they come in. I have recently though, got into the habit of not looking at my emails past a certain point in the evening until the next morning. Probably one of the toughest parts about working from home is learning when to 'switch off'. Extremely difficult if you are working on a makeshift office/kitchen table.

Remove distractions (or in my case, learn to ignore the dogs!) – my dogs can be a huge distraction (also at times, my saviours though). One of my 'take a breaks' would be my dog walk which is definitely best done at some point during the morning or I wouldn't get anything done all day. Distractions can be dangerous to a working day – that wall that's half painted, the floors that need cleaning, that interesting program just started on the TV. You have to learn to ignore it all until the appropriate time – and I NEVER have the TV on while I'm working – too distracting for me.

Communicate regularly – We have a fab team at TICL and obviously, at present we are all working remotely – and we all live fair distances from each other. That being said, we are always communicating with each other. We have a regular Home Working Squares get together over zoom every Monday (Hayley's idea) and it's great to just chat and say 'Hi'. I actually feel closer to my team since 'lockdown' as everyone is easier to get hold of. In our line of work our consultants were travelling and working all over the UK and the lockdown has given us a chance to re-connect I think.

In short, for me, I wouldn't really want to work any other way – if you have good discipline and a regular structure to your day there is so much you can achieve working from home. And, as I keep seeing all over the news feeds on a regular basis, working from home looks like becoming the new normal in this very strange time we are in. When Covid19 eventually 'does one' – I for one think it will be very interesting to see exactly how many people want to go back to the way it was before!