

Wellness Wednesday



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10 Ways To Make Working From Home More Bearable

Right Now—In winter, we have a tendency to hibernate, but that doesn't cut it with a nine to five.

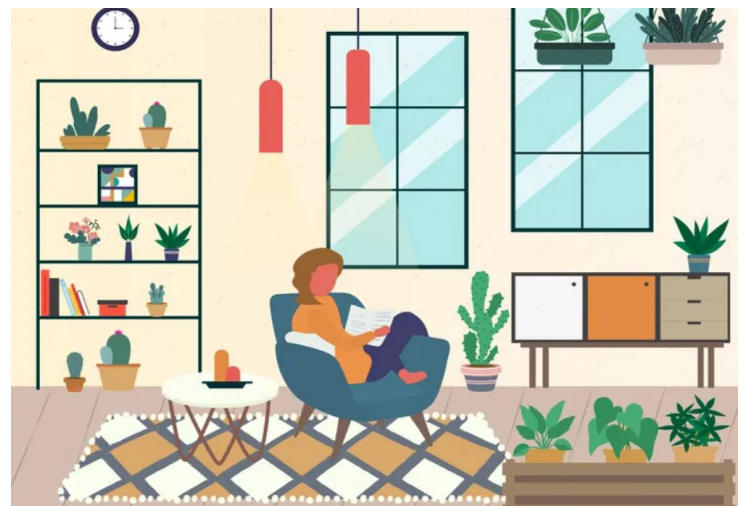
When working from home, it can be hard to stay comfy and warm, let alone focus on the job at hand. Temperatures are dropping, the skies are looming and grey, and we're still wrapping our heads around the pandemic.

In winter, we have a tendency to slide into isolation and hibernate, but that doesn't work with a nine to five. So here are some top tips from environmental psychologist and wellbeing consultant, Lee Chambers, on how to feel more positive and productive.

1. Let the light in

Make the most of what little light we actually have during the daytime in winter. Rearrange your home workspace and position your desk beside a window to maximize as much natural daylight and vitamin D as physically possible.

"The light is more powerful in winter because it's limited," Chambers tells HuffPost UK. "I often suggest people switch up their home office next to a bigger window with more light. When the day is shorter, it's more important. It really boosts motivation and gets us feeling like we're not deep, dark winter."



2. Stock up on houseplants

Plants can help breathe more life into a room so add some greenery to your workspace. According to a study published earlier this year by a team of scientists at the University of Hyogo, Japan, a plant on your desk can reduce stress and anxiety levels, helping your mental health in the longterm.

"The beauty is that as you care for them, you get that gardening fix that gets people feeling grounded and attached to nature," says Chambers, "even when the trees are bare outside. With plants still growing around you, even in harshness of winter, it's a reminder of growth, and that spring isn't far away."

3. Schedule some 'me' time

Don't just mark in meetings where you're talking to people about work stuff. Try to book in social time outside of work and some quality self-care time ,too.

"In winter you need to be more disciplined with your schedule," says Chambers. "If not, you become more stressed, can easily go back into a shell and become a hermit. Book in coziness time like a meeting with yourself. Get the essential oils out, warming bath, have it to look forward to after a long day's work."

4. Get things in the diary

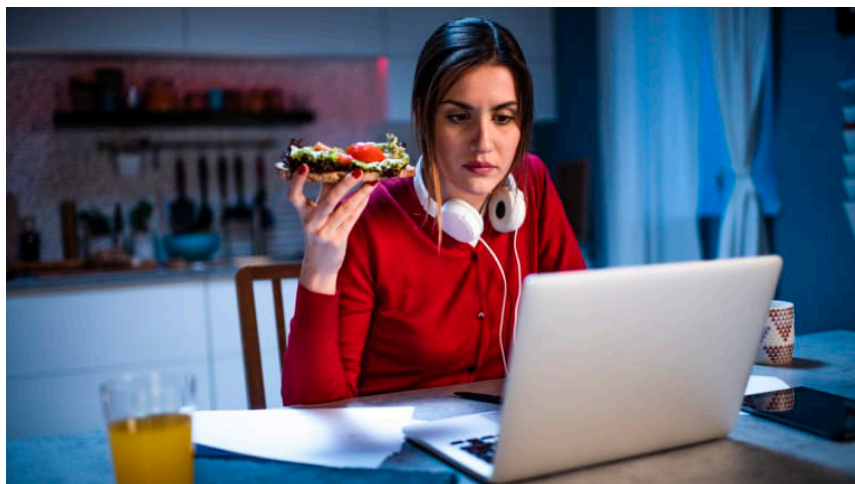
It's easy to slip back into living in an infinite present mindset, but it's important to have things to look forward to. It'll keep the motivation going and set things in stone, even if we don't know what the rules might look like in the next few months. It's likely to be an unusual holiday season ahead – but that doesn't necessarily mean it's ruined.

"Make your own Christmas market in back garden, do a mini bonfire night, have a fun virtual [holiday work party]," Chambers suggests. "Start to get things in the diary you're looking forward to – excitement and anticipation bolsters you."

5. Eat well, do well

Diet has a more direct impact on work output and productivity levels than most of us realize. The WHO reports that "while no foods or dietary supplements can prevent or cure COVID-19 infection, healthy diets are important for supporting immune systems." Good nutrition also reduces the likelihood of developing other health problems, including obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and some types of cancer.

It also helps raise productivity, efficiency, energy and boost morale. "You'll be better able to focus and accomplish tasks when you've eaten properly," says Chambers. "Try meal prepping and cooking more at home, and eat more wholesomely, densely, than summer. Switch a cup of tea out for a hot chocolate."



Food-wise, why not try some of these heartier recipes for soups, instant one-pot stews, or easy make-ahead breakfasts that will keep you warmer for longer.

6. Move about, even a bit

As tempting as it is to stay in bed for an extra hour or retire to the sofa after a long day's work, it's important still to incorporate regular exercise indoors or outdoors, even if it's cold, dark and wet. Developing healthy routines feels so much easier throughout summer when the mornings are light and the days are long, but fitness and movement are key for happy endorphins.

“Do simple exercises in the house, run on the spot, practice yoga,” he explains. “It’s an easy way to warm yourself up, boosts blood flow to brain and will make work feels a bit easier.”

Remember to take regular short breaks from sitting. The WHO suggests “doing three to four minutes of light intensity movement, such as walking or stretching, will help ease your muscles and improve blood circulation and muscle activity.”

7. Catch more Zs

Sleep deprivation and insomnia have skyrocketed during the pandemic. Most of us accept we pay the next day if we only get a short night’s sleep and will expect to function feeling a bit dull or fuzzy around the edges.

It’s been scientifically proven that getting enough rest can improve your attention and concentration, allowing you to stay sharper and more focused, even in these weird times. It also strengthens your immune system, giving your body the time it needs to repair – one of the reasons that you sleep more when you’re unwell.

“The darker nights make us more fatigued and getting more sleep helps boost emotional hormonal regulation,” Chambers adds. “So, make sure you get enough sleep once the winter months roll around.”

8. Start journaling

Our thoughts might be all over the place right now, but a journal can help keep your brain in better shape. Not only does it boost memory and comprehension, it also keeps thoughts organized, set and achieve goals, and by getting things out on paper it can also be a big stress-reliever. Here’s a guide to the “bullet journal” approach, for starters.

“Journalling gives people a chance to reflect and get out and do things,” says Chambers. “Yes, there are limits to what we currently can and can’t do right now, but winter doesn’t change and we can still socialize outdoors.” Just make sure you’re aware of the rules in your area.

9. Limit social media

Be mindful of social media and news consumption. While it’s important to stay up to date with health advice and be connected, it’s just as vital to switch off when you need. “Winter can fuel negativity, which put us in a downwards spiral,” Chambers explains. “It’s often fueled by a lot of the stuff we get fed online and what media we consume.”

Try setting timer limits on phones, build a routine where you allow yourself time to look at social media and news in the mornings or evenings for a set period of time – and put digital devices away an hour before bed.

10. Appreciate the little things

It’s hard to find joy in unsettling times, but there are ways to practice gratitude, and the more we can appreciate, the better our outlook on life.

“We get conditioned, we get society’s expectations upon us, we love to complain about anything and everything,” says Chambers. “Appreciate leaves falling off trees or watch the snow fall – these little moments are something we don’t get to see in an office environment.”



AIR FRYER HERBED BUTTERMILK ROAST CHICKEN BREAST

243 Calories | PREP TIME: 30 mins | COOK TIME: 55 mins | TOTAL TIME: 1 hour 25 mins
YIELD: 2 Servings | COURSE: Dinner | CUISINE: American



INGREDIENTS

1 large bone-in skin-on split chicken breast,
(1 1/4 to 1 1/2 lbs)
1 cup 1% buttermilk
1 1/2 teaspoons dried parsley
1 1/2 teaspoons fresh or dried chives
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon dried dill
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
olive oil spray

Brining the chicken in buttermilk makes it so juicy – the more time in the buttermilk, the better! Also, the skin and bones make the chicken very tender compared to a boneless, skinless breast.

TIPS:

OVEN DIRECTIONS:

If you don't have an air fryer, you can roast the chicken in the oven. Cook the breast for 35-45 minutes at 400 degrees until a thermometer reads 160 degrees.

Nutrition Information

Serving: 4 oz with skin, Calories: 243 kcal, Carbohydrates: 2 g, Protein: 34.5 g, Fat: 9.5 g, Saturated Fat: 3 g, Cholesterol: 94 mg, Sodium: 454 mg, Sugar: 1.5 g
Source: Skinnytaste.com



INSTRUCTIONS



How to make:

Place the chicken in a bowl and pour the buttermilk over, covering completely. Set chicken at room temperature at least 20 minutes or refrigerated up to 4 hours.

Meanwhile in a bowl combine the remaining spices.

Remove the chicken from the buttermilk, letting the excess drip off, then place skin side up into the air fryer.

Sprinkle the seasoning mix over the top and let it stand 5 minutes until it soaks in.

Spray the top of the chicken with oil. Cook at 300F for 10 minutes then increase the heat to 350F and cook until an instant read thermometer inserted into the thickest part reads 160F, and the chicken is golden in color, 30 to 35 minutes.

Transfer to a cutting board and let it rest 10 minutes. Then cut the meat off the bone and cut into thick slices for serving.

FEATURED EXERCISE

Lunge With Reach and Twist

Perfect for after a run or Spin class, this lunge targets the deep hip flexors, found at the front of the hip.

Begin in a runner's lunge, and place your right hand on the outside of your right foot. Reach your left hand to the ceiling, increasing the stretch on the left side of the body. Hold for 10 to 15 seconds.

Then place the left hand at the inside of your right foot. Twist to the right and reach your right arm to the ceiling. Hold this position for 10 to 15 seconds.

Repeat this sequence on the other side. Feel free to do this stretch two to three times on each side.



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<https://www.popsugar.com/fitness/photo-gallery/43473842/image/43473879/Lunge-Reach-Twist>

Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.



**'IN 20 YEARS,
YOU WILL
BE MORE
DISAPPOINTED
BY WHAT YOU
DIDN'T DO THAN
BY WHAT
YOU DID.'**

— MARK TWAIN



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