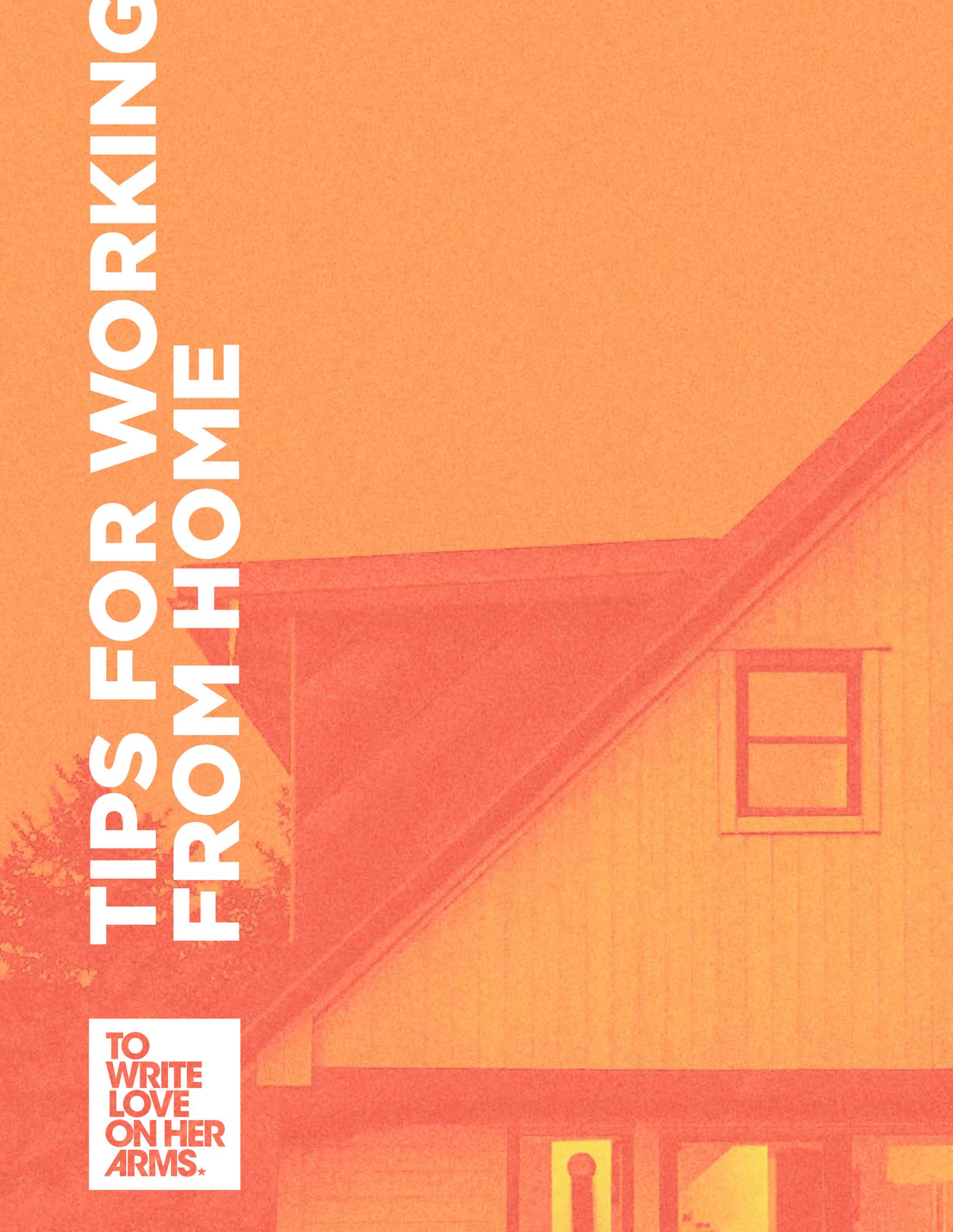


# TIPS FOR WORKING FROM HOME

**TO  
WRITE  
LOVE  
ON HER  
ARMS\***



*Like many of you, most of our team is currently working from home. We consider ourselves fortunate knowing that others may not have that option.*

*However, this change brings with it new challenges. We've struggled with how to re-create a sense of community when we're no longer in a shared space. We've had to find ways to structure our days and create boundaries so we don't forget to take time for ourselves.*

*We'd like to share what we're learning with you. We hope it helps you navigate this transition. And, more importantly, we hope it reminds you that you're not alone. We're in this together.*

## REMINDERS:

**This is not working from home under normal circumstances.** This is working from home when you're also potentially worried about the future or your friends and family members or having to wrangle kids and pets or sharing space with a spouse/roommate/friend who isn't normally home when you are. This is moving an entire part of your life (work) to an entirely different place (home). It's OK if it doesn't feel normal or easy. Nothing about this is.

**Change is hard. Show yourself grace if you struggle to adjust.** Working from home isn't necessarily fun, relaxing, or easy. You're still at work. And now you're potentially surrounded by distractions and other people/things competing for your time and attention. It's OK to get frustrated. There will be an adjustment period.

**If you get overwhelmed, come back to your why:** Staying at home is a preventative act and will help stop the spread of the coronavirus, protect vulnerable people in your community, and hopefully ease the burden on healthcare professionals.

**Everything below is a suggestion** that is informed by our personal experiences or the experience of others who have worked remotely for an extended period of time. Take what you need and disregard what doesn't fit.

## TIPS:

- 1. Where should you work?**
  - a. Ideally, you'll have a table, desk, or some kind of flexible setup in your house. Best case scenario is that you have a designated spot that will only be used for working. If that's not the case, find the most comfortable place you can commit to sitting at for most of the work day.
  - b. If you like to use a standing desk, see what counters or high spaces are in your place that you can creatively turn into a standing surface.
- 2. Think about what you didn't love about your office experience and adapt your home workspace to account for that.**
  - a. Did you dislike the bright fluorescent lighting? Maybe set up near a window and work with natural light.
  - b. Did you wish that you could light a candle? Now's your chance!
  - c. No room for flowers on your desk? Decorate your space as desired!
  - d. Bonus: No more commute! How can you make the *best* (not the most) of that time?
- 3. Think about what you did like about your office experience and figure out how to make your home work experience reflect that.**
  - a. If you like the buzz of the office around you, find a Spotify/Pandora/etc. playlist that mimics office life or a coffee shop so you don't feel like you're working alone.
  - b. Do you usually eat lunch with a coworker? Consider FaceTiming or calling a friend to enjoy your break together virtually.

#### 4. Structure your day.

- a. You should have a clear beginning, middle, and end to your work day.
- b. Take breaks. Maybe see if something like the [Pomodoro Method](#) (short work intervals with breaks in between) works for you.
- c. Leave your work area for lunch or at the very least don't work through/sit at your computer during lunch.
- d. Don't work after typical work hours unless it's required. When it's time to log off, close your computer and have a firm end to your work day.

#### 5. Get dressed and ready for work.

- a. If you want to wear sweatpants/workout clothes/pajama pants, that's fine! But simply changing clothes and putting on something that feels like you're showing up will help get you in the right headspace to work.
- b. We also recommend keeping a routine that's similar to the one you had when you were working at the office. Get up, wash your face, brush your teeth, maybe put on makeup. Do whatever you need to do to feel ready to work.

#### 6. Overcommunicate and find creative ways to work with your team.

- a. If teams can/want to, everyone can get on video (via a software like Zoom or a Slack call) and just work independently. This will save you from having to call people to ask questions. It'll also make you feel a little less lonely.

#### 7. Go outside.

- a. If you can, get outside on your lunch break and stretch. If you can't swing that, find another time to get outside for some fresh air.

#### 8. Manage your mental health and anxiety.

- a. **Isolation:** Can you call your coworkers during work hours so you feel like you're still in touch? Can you call your friends and family during your breaks/after work? How else can you get quality time in with people you won't be seeing in person? We recommend things like the Marco Polo app, FaceTime, etc. You can even FaceTime people while you're on a walk and go on a walk "with" them.
- b. **Teletherapy:** If you're set up with a counselor, see if they offer teletherapy so you don't have to come to the office or stop your sessions.
- c. **Movement:** Get up and stretch occasionally. You may move less often than you did at the office. This goes along with getting outside. If you can go for a short stroll every day, your body will thank you and your mental health will be a bit better off.
- d. **Happy light:** If you can't get outside as much as you would like, invest in a "[happy light](#)" that imitates the positive effects of the sun.
- e. **Talk to your manager.** If you're struggling, reach out and see how those around you can support you through this transition.
- f. **Mental health resources:**
  - i. [Crisis Text Line](#): Free 24/7 text support. You can text TWLOHA to 741741 to get connected (for free) with a crisis counselor.
  - ii. [TWLOHA](#): If you're in the US, you can use our FIND HELP Tool to locate free or reduced-cost resources in your area by entering your zip code. For those living outside of the US, visit our [International Resources page](#).
  - iii. [Shine Text](#): Receive texts that will help you with anxiety and stress.
  - iv. Meditation Apps: [Calm](#) and [Headspace](#) offer free trials. Check out Headspace's new [Weathering the storm](#) meditations.

## 9. Operate like you're in the office.

- a. Move as often as you would in the office. Don't force yourself to sit and be productive every single minute you're at home.
- b. Answer calls and texts like you normally would. Unless you need to be, tell friends/family/roommates/etc. that you're not available during work hours (or you're as available as you were before—not more so).

## 10. Anticipate interruptions.

- a. Life is loud. So are your pets and kids and washers and dryers and upstairs neighbors and construction crews. That's OK. Go on mute during phone meetings if you can't avoid it. Try not to stress when it happens.
- b. Minimize your distractions. Turn your phone on Do Not Disturb and shut off any unnecessary push notifications.

## 11. Clean your space.

- a. Once you start working from a different place, you may realize it's not as tidy as you want it to be. Keep your space clean and free of distractions if possible.
- b. If you start to daydream about cleaning your kitchen (while working from your kitchen table), it might be time for a break. You can use that break to clean your kitchen, but it might also be your brain's way of telling you to just step away from work for a minute.

## MORE TIPS FROM OUR TEAM:

"I set my clothes out the night before because I am not a morning person, and I don't want to fall back on wearing pajamas because that is not conducive to my productivity." – *Claire*

"I stick to a morning routine that includes getting dressed, journaling, and meditating all before work. It allows me to start my day off with a (mostly) clear head." – *Becky*

"At work we don't always get to choose our environment or the aesthetics of that space. At home we have a little more freedom, so lean into that. Set the thermostat to your comfort level, scooch next to a window, stretch, pace, hang your favorite pictures or art in clear view, listen to the music that you think your coworkers wouldn't appreciate...and wash your hands using YOUR favorite scent of soap." – *Chad*

"For those working with small kids at home, it's okay to be honest about interruptions or hard stops. Sometimes you need to attend and give your attention to meet literal physical needs and that's okay." – *Lindsay*

"Keep in mind that your coworkers are adjusting to this new way of working too. You might be in productive mode while they're experiencing the opposite. Be considerate of their workload and what they are dealing with too. We all deserve a little bit of grace as we figure this out together." – *Jessica*

"Keeping things clean has kind of helped for me. I'm not naturally or normally clean, but having a tidy workstation and living situation enables me to be a bit more creative and productive." – *Alex*