

Finding comfort in a new healthy routine



TIPSHEET



A new year is upon us, and with it brings new opportunities to establish healthy habits. Although we continue to navigate life with COVID-19, maintaining a daily routine—especially while working from home—is crucial to an overall sense of wellbeing.

Anything you do regularly and consistently can become a ritual. Yes, that also includes the 'bad habits' many of us have adopted since having our normal routine disrupted after the outbreak of COVID-19, like avoid exercising because the gym is closed or choosing screen time over sleep. When it comes to building a healthier lifestyle, you might be more successful with adding in new behaviours rather than attempting to break maladaptive routines.

Learn more about how behaviour change works from the renowned expert Dr. BJ Fogg in his 5-part video guide, [How habits really work](#).

We've got some tips for every part of your day to help you get started.



Set the tone for the day

Beginning your morning with your health and wellbeing in mind is key to building a great daily routine. In fact, studies show that our willpower and motivation to engage in healthy behaviours is strongest in the morning, so take advantage of it!



Wake up at the same time each day

By allowing yourself plenty of opportunity to complete each step of your new morning ritual, you'll avoid feeling rushed and stressed, setting the tone for the remainder of the day.



Drink a glass of water when you first wake up

This habit has a myriad of benefits, ranging from increased energy and productivity to improved hydration and immunity.



Have a healthy breakfast

Remember what we said about willpower being highest in the morning? That applies to food choices, too. Go for a balanced meal that includes protein, whole grains and some healthy fats, like a Greek yoghurt bowl topped with oats and a drizzle of nut butter or sneak some vegetables in with an omelet or egg sandwich.



Make time to move, whether it's a quick walk around the block, twenty minutes of household chores or a morning workout

You'll start the day feeling like you've already accomplished something, and you'll enter the afternoon with extra pep in your step.



Get dressed as if you're going to the office

It may have been fun to wear your pyjamas all day at first, but once the novelty wears off, it can hurt your productivity.



Take a break

Working from home means juggling a lot of distractions and responsibilities. Pets are whining for attention, kids are interrupting Zoom meetings with questions about schoolwork and the laundry you forgot to do last night is staring you in the face all day. Allow yourself small breaks throughout the day to recentre yourself and stay on task during working hours.



Get up and stretch between meetings or after long periods of work

It's likely that your at-home workstation isn't as ergonomically correct as your office set-up, which could lead to musculoskeletal issues like chronic back and neck pain over time.



Step away from your laptop for a nutritious lunch

Making time for a mindful midday meal can increase feelings of satiety while helping you avoid that afternoon slump.



Coordinate your break with your family's schedule

If your children are engaged in distance learning this year, try lining up your break time with theirs. Whether they need help with schoolwork or are feeling antsy, dedicating 15-20 minutes to address their needs can help to discourage unexpected interruptions during the rest of your workday.

Create an after-work ritual

It's important to establish boundaries when you're working from home to maintain some sense of normalcy and work-life balance. Adopting an after-work routine can help to signal that it's time to log off and disconnect from the work for the day.



Sign off from work at an appropriate time as often as possible

There may be occasions where a meeting runs over or a looming deadline keeps you working a little later than usual, but try to put away your work at the time you would normally end your shift at the office.



Step away from work—literally

Go for a quick walk, run an errand or fit in that daily workout if you didn't get to it in the morning.



Prepare a healthy dinner with your family

This can be a great bonding activity with your loved ones and gives you something to look forward to each night. Cooking with your kids, spouse or roommates can also make your nutritious meal taste better, making it easier to stick to a balanced diet and curtail late-night snacking.

Wind down for the day

A nighttime routine is key to getting a goodnight's sleep and setting yourself up for another productive day. Reducing screen time and stress are essential to help your body physically and emotionally unwind as you prepare for bed.



Spend time with family or engaging in a relaxing activity you love

Rather than plopping on the couch to mindlessly watch Netflix, work on a puzzle, take a warm bath, call a friend or read a book to help your mind and body wind down from the day.



Write down 3-5 things you're grateful for

Practicing gratitude can boost your mood, increase resilience and improve your overall health, meaning you'll be better prepared to take on whatever the upcoming day throws at you.



Prepare for the day ahead

Set your alarm, lay out your work outfit, put together your lunch for the following day and get to bed at a reasonable time to ensure you're getting the recommended 7-9 hours of sleep.

Small changes can make a big difference. Try out one or two new healthy habits each day and find ones that work for you lifestyle and that you enjoy. With consistency and practice, your old habits will gradually be replaced with a set of new daily rituals, leading to a healthier, happier you.



Get in touch to learn how Virgin Pulse can help you make healthy habits easy for every employee, every day with our science-backed approach and category-defining solutions.