



**DATA IS WORTH
MORE THAN GOLD.**

MIKE  SEMEL



CORONAVIRUS TELEWORKING CYBERSECURITY AT HOME



Coronavirus is disrupting everything. I've helped hundreds of businesses with their business continuity plans and I want to help you. Let me know what questions you have.

Many of you are wondering about running your organizations with all your staff, or at least departments that don't need to face patients or customers, working from home.

The nature of this virus is that people may be stigmatized for being carriers who infected others. Everyone deserves privacy and compassion during this time. If you work in healthcare you still have an obligation to keep patient information confidential or face serious consequences. If you work in HR, you still have to keep workforce member confidential even when working from home.

And, working from home doesn't mean that your sensitive business information should be shared with others.

Your home was not designed with confidentiality requirements in mind. There are things you must do to ensure that your family and friends (don't worry about infants or the dog, cat, or goldfish) don't see or hear things that compromise patient, client, or workforce member confidentiality.

Below is a good teleworking article from Inc. Magazine. Before you read it, here are some things your folks should and should not do because of regulations and keeping other protected or sensitive information confidential.



1. **DO** use a secure connection to ensure end-to-end encryption of data in transit. This can be a VPN to the office or from home to a security filtering company that will verify web connection links for safety.
2. **DON'T** use the computer in an accessible place in the house where others may see what is on the screen. If you have to use your kitchen table turn everything so your family can't see your screen.
3. **DON'T** access critical medical or business systems from computers that your family shares and may already be compromised. If a hacker has installed a key-logging system on your unsecure family computer, they can get the password to your most sensitive business systems. Use a business system or have your IT department or vendor inspect your home computer before use.
4. **DON'T** print documents unless you can immediately secure them from unauthorized viewers. Remember, if you didn't print it you wouldn't have to worry about it.
5. **DON'T** throw away sensitive or regulated printed business documents. Shred them.
6. **DON'T** have business phone calls to discuss patients, clients, or workforce members where anyone else can hear the confidential information.
7. **DON'T** fall for email scams asking for money transfers, sensitive information, gift card purchases, or payroll direct deposit redirections without TALKING to the person making the request to verify it.
8. **DO** log off if you have to walk away, even for a minute, which may turn into 10 or 20.

What do you still need to know?

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Inc.

<https://www.inc.com/christina-desmarais/get-more-done-18-tips-for-telecommuters.html>

Get More Done: 18 Tips for Telecommuters

Remote workers weigh in on what helps them amp productivity and stay in touch with the office.



By Christina DesMarais Contributor, Inc.com [@salubriousdish](#)

[Working from home is great](#) on so many levels. Not having to commute saves money and time and can actually [make you happier](#). A plethora of [free tools](#) make it dead simple to check in with office teammates. And if you want to work in sweats or pajamas, you can.

But there are challenges, as well. How do you keep from getting distracted with domestic duties? How do you handle a friend who stops by unannounced in the middle of the day? How do you get anything done if you have kids around?

A slew of people who [work from home](#) chimed in on the subject. Here's their advice on [how to make telecommuting work](#).

- 1. Identify what needs to get done every day and make sure to do it.** "As long as I have a plan on how to complete the list of daily tasks on my personal to-do list, it doesn't matter if or how I may be interrupted, as long as I get things done by the end of the day," says Michael Pesochinsky, VP, GC and CTO of Great Neck, New York-based [GovernmentBargains](#).
- 2. Use the cloud.** Klaus Sonnenleiter, president and CEO of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey-based [PrintedArt](#), insists that important documents need to be uploaded to a cloud storage service such as Dropbox or Google Drive. "This way you can log in from anywhere and never need to worry about having your files with you," he says.
- 3. Get dressed.** "I find that the most important thing for me is to keep a regular routine and to shower and dress every day as if I were going to an actual office," says Jenifer Kramer, Principal of West Hollywood, California-based [Jenerosity Marketing](#).

Catherine Waldron, education specialist, with Enfield, Connecticut-based language curriculum company [QTalk Publishing](#), agrees, and says she showers and dresses for work every day. "Getting dressed makes the home office more like a real office, and tells and reminds everyone, especially you, that even though you may be sitting on the sofa reading, browsing the Web, or talking on the phone, that you are actually working," she says.



4. Don't let friends stop by. Dana Marlowe, principal partner of the Silver Spring, Maryland-based IT accessibility consulting firm [Accessibility Partners](#), uses lunch as a time to meet with friends and if they show up at her house she politely tells them she's working. "Boundaries are only as effective as they are enforced," she says.

Catherine Simms, co-founder of Stamford, Connecticut-based pet accessories company [Whiner & Diner](#), also avoids drop-in visitors. "I just tell them that it is not a good time [and] over the weekend would be better," she says. She also instructs them to call first to see if she's home. Then when they do she doesn't pick up, at least during work hours.

5. Get out of the house. Meagan French, marketing consultant with San Francisco-based [Meagan French Marketing](#), likes to work out of coffee shops. "Leaving my house to work helps separate my work time and personal time," she says.

6. Make a stoplight for family members. Here's an idea from John Meyer, CEO of Miramar, Florida-based work-at-home call center company [Arise Virtual Solutions](#). Hang or tape colored construction paper on your office door. "Tape the red light up when you cannot be disturbed and the green light when it's OK to come in. Yellow light means to check first," he says. "Kids, no matter what age, understand the message and enjoy playing along." (For more commentary on how to deal with distractions from kids, check out [3 tips for working from home with kids](#).)

7. Invest in creating a comfortable office. Deb McAlister-Holland, a [freelance marketing professional](#) in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, says the \$5,000 she spent remodeling her home office was the best thing she ever did to increase her productivity. "I love my home office. It has a big leather sofa, three walls covered with built-in bookshelves and storage cabinets, dedicated circuits for my computers, special lighting, and a soft hand-woven rug on the floor that's the perfect spot for my dog to nap while I work," she says.

Frank Niles, co-founder and partner of Fayetteville, Arkansas-based [Scholar Executive Group](#), a boutique executive coaching and executive counseling firm, sings a similar tune. "It may sound trivial but it's not--also buy yourself a comfortable business chair," he says. "You'll be more inclined to stay working... As a result, you'll be more productive."

8. Be clear about your working hours. "Post your hours of operation on your door, as with any office and stick to them. Indicate on your voicemail your hours of operation and refer the caller to your residence phone if it is personal," says Denise Beeson, [small business loan officer](#) and business instructor at Santa Rosa Jr. College, in Santa Rosa, California.

9. Pretend you're not home. Don't answer your home phone or door during business hours, advises Ron Sellers, president of Phoenix-based [Grey Matter Research & Consulting](#). "That way, I'm never tempted to chat or take time off or slack off in any way, and I remain focused on business," he says.

10. Don't go to non-work appointments in the middle of the day. "I try to make doctor and dentist appointments just as I would in a company office, first thing in the morning, last thing in the day to minimize



disruptions of my work," says Linda Stokes, managing partner of the [Academy Physicians](#), a physician recruiting company in the Albuquerque, New Mexico, area.

11. Get in-person time with co-workers. Once a month the four-person virtual team at Moreno Valley, California-based commercial telecom company TelecomQuotes meets in person. "I'm a big believer in kinesthetic learning or learning by doing and that's a bit of a lost art with our virtual world," says CEO Michael Bremmer. "There is something about white boarding an idea, while talking through the story and everyone is leaning in, engaged, thinking about a common goal, drawing on the deep water thoughts, that you just don't seem to get on a conference call or video call."

12. Use Google+ Hangouts. While it's ideal if you can occasionally meet in-person with coworkers, sometimes it's not possible because teams are separated by geography. In that case, video chatting is the next best thing, with Google+ Hangouts being an excellent medium for doing it. You can meet with up to 10 people for free, unlike Skype in which at least one person in the group has to have a paid subscription for meetings between more than two people. It also lets you do things like share your screen with others or pull in apps such SlideShare or Cadoo to draw or give presentations, respectively. Check out [Google+ a Ghost Town? Hardly](#), which discusses why Hangouts are good for business.

13. Enjoy your flexibility. Find your focus wavering? Take a break with a bike ride, swim, or even by quitting work for the entire day. That's according to Patti Hill, founder and managing director of Austin, Texas-based [Penman PR](#). "Because my work schedule can be as flexible as I need it to be, sometimes it's important to walk away," she says. "It's amazing what a cool dip on a hot day can do for helping boost creative juices."

14. Enjoy disruptions. While some remote workers eschew personal visits during the work day, others take the opposite tack. Denny Daniel, curator of New York City-based [The Museum of Interesting Things](#), says he started his own thing to reap the benefits of being his own boss. "So when people drop by I try to live life and see them unless I am with a client or not here, of course. If it is busy then at least I see them for a moment and enjoy life a bit too. It makes me work better in the end," he says.

15. Stay out of the kitchen. "This is sort of the dirty little secret of telecommuters, but it's like the freshman 15 all over again. I shudder at the thought of how many times I opened the fridge that first year. It was just constant snacking," says Joy Martini, president of the New York City-based marketing and communications firm [Martini Consulting](#). "So you need a kind of discipline and that's really the clincher for the whole thing: having the discipline to get done what you need to get done; the discipline to avoid the kitchen; the discipline to kick your drop-in friends out."

16. Buy a noise-cancelling headset with a mute button. The last thing you want is to be in an online meeting and have the doorbell ring or police sirens blaring the background. "Perception is reality," says New York City-based Jonathan Vlock, co-Founder of the meal-planning app [Cooking Planit](#). "You want people to think you run a tight ship, and have all of the necessary resources at your fingertips. This is especially critical when you are an entrepreneur talking to someone at a larger organization. People can't visualize your home but they can certainly visualize an office, and that is exactly what you want them to [see and hear]."



17. Check in with co-workers and the boss several times a day. Several years ago I worked for a large company that let me telecommute several times a week. Because I wanted everyone in the office to know I was really working and not watching TV or out shopping, I made a point of emailing and calling co-workers and especially my boss a few times a day.

18. Make use of free or inexpensive communications technology. Today there are countless tools available for keeping in close communication with office mates. A few to try include [Hipchat](#) for group chatting, [Trello](#) or [Asana](#) for project management, [Expensify](#) for tracking expenses and submitting expense reports and [Sqwiggle](#), which keeps your webcam turned on so your co-workers can see you at your desk all day long.

Want more? Check out Jeff Haden's popular story, [4 Extreme Habits of Highly Successful Remote Teams](#).

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