

So now you have to work from home!

If you've never worked from home and the Coronavirus is mandating that you do, it can be quite a challenge. For the past 26 years, I have worked out of my home and have coached many first-timers on making the move to domestic officing! I'll jump right in:

Several things to consider:

- **Kitchen table or extra bedroom**

I've seen many advisors start with a computer on the kitchen table and that is good...for about 8 hours. Then that pesky thing called dinner happens and your "office" is now in the way. Sure, you can move your computer and all the other accoutrements every time a meal is served but it would be wiser to set up shop somewhere that is YOURS where you don't have to bug out 3 times a day or share your space.

- **Pens, tablet and tape ... Oh my!**

Having everything in your space will prevent you from running all over the place tracking things down. Take a picture of your office (or close your eyes and visualize it if that ship has sailed) at work and set up your desk at home to include all the tools that you need. I mean everything from paperclips and staples to files and a printer.

- **Look at the bunny!**

Working from home for the first time can be a little like an amusement park. All kinds of shiny objects, swirly rides and food stands that grab your attention WAY more than your work does. You'll see the TV just sitting there calling your name, laundry that needs your attention and the refrigerator full of food tempting your sweet tooth. And, what if nature throws in a beautiful day in the high 70s with glorious sunshine to boot? This is when a plan is critical! Read on.

- **Ready, set, go!**

If you wake up and wait for the most important things to guide your day, you'll go running down many dead end streets only to wonder why, at the end of the day, you have nothing to show for the time you spent at work! Take just 10 minutes a day to plan what today will look like or sit down at 4 or 5pm to plan the next day so you can hit the ground running on the tasks that need your attention.

- **Punch in and punch out**

Without designated work hours at home, one of two things happen here...1. You work 16 – 18 hours a day because your work is "right there" and you can always squeeze in another thing, or 2. You waste a boatload of time doing things that have nothing to do with work and end up sacrificing sleep to make up for it. Choose

your work hours, plan those hours out (see above) and tell your family when you are “off limits” so they won’t interrupt you. When work is done, you’re done. Don’t go back in there until the next morning. If you have a door, close it. Period. Your ability to abide by your own rules will help your family to abide by theirs too.

- **Make beautiful music together**

Everyone in your home needs to be singing from the same page of music, so to speak. Creating boundaries include but are not limited to setting your work hours and letting everyone in your home know when you are available and when you are not. Some people use signals such as having your door open, wearing your headset, or putting a sign on your door that says, “come in”, etc. Decide together what activities are allowed to take place while you’re working. Take into consideration the noise levels and anything that helps you protect the boundaries of your space and interrupt-ability. Everyone needs to respect each other’s space and the established boundaries.

- **FOCUS, FOCUS, FOCUS**

The most important word you want to keep in mind if you’re working from home for the first time is, you guessed it...FOCUS! Remember that you’re here to do a job, not clean your house or watch Ellen (as tempting as it may be). Without focus, you’ll be chasing bunnies all day. Is it OK to put a load of laundry in? Perhaps, but keep your blinders on so you don’t get pulled into something else on the way back to your office!

Working from home is a gift that I have treasured for years. If you struggle and need help in any way, [schedule a free 30-minute coaching session](#) with me to UNCORK your PRODUCTIVITY or visit [Patty’s FPA Member’s-Only page](#).

Stay healthy and productive!



Patty Kreamer, CPO® coaches financial advisors to take control of their time, brain clutter, priorities, overwhelm, to-do list, inbox, interruptions, distractions and anything getting in the way of productivity. She is a Certified Professional Organizer® and Productivity Coach and co-owner of Productivity Uncorked, LLC where they work exclusively with financial advisors.

Patty is the author of ***But I Might Need It Someday!***, ***The Power of Simplicity***, co-author of the Amazon best-seller ***A Woman’s Way: Empowering Female Financial Advisors to Authentically Lead and Flourish in a Man’s World*** (2018) and contributing author of ***Success Simplified*** with the late Stephen Covey.