There’s an old Yiddish saying, passed down to me from my grandparents, that is worth recalling in these uncertain and potentially infectious times: “When three people say you’re drunk, go lie down in the gutter.” So, when my brother the doctor (he’s the smart one) texted the family last night to say about COVID-19 “go out and buy two weeks of provisions; this is going to be bad”, I took heed and headed out to the store.

Which brings me to work. Many of us are soon likely to told, not asked, to work from home (WFH). I have WFH for the better part of a decade and I can tell you that it takes, well, work to keep your productivity high when the couch, TV and ‘fridge are all within easy reach. I have come to love WFH and like to think I’ve learned a thing or two about it. It’s not for everyone, so here are few hard-learned lessons for those of you new to the art.

Know your tech: One of the first things you learn when working from home is that all those nice folks upon whom you rely to do stuff for you at the office do not live at your house. Rude. So, make sure you know how to use the tech available to you. And not just email and IM. Know how to set up your own conference calls, schedule your own meetings, and create and file your own documents. Make sure you have
downloaded and know how to use any productivity apps, both those your firm uses and personal apps.

**Security:** Keep your personal and work stuff separate. Don’t use your personal laptop for company business and vice versa. Make sure your home wifi is up to your company’s security standards. Use anti-virus and anti-malware software and try not to connect to public wifi.

**Wifi:** You will want to make sure you have the speed and reliability to handle your workflow. You may need to upgrade your wifi plan.

**Phone:** If your cell service is spotty, you will need to do something about that. (Ask me how I know.) You can enable wifi calling on your cell phone if your cellular service is subpar and you can obtain a booster from your cellular provider, sometimes for free, if you can demonstrate that your service is lousy at home. And you should finally learn how to use the conference call feature on your cell phone without hanging up on everyone.

**You Do You:** It may take you some time to adjust to life without an office. For me, the issue was that I was “always on”. With no commute to deal with and the “office” steps from the bedroom, I would be at work from the time I awoke to the time I went to bed. Not good. As my wife succinctly put it to me years ago (while firmly closing my laptop mid-email one evening) “Office hours are over for the day.” There may have been an expletive or two in there somewhere. Anyhow, set reasonable boundaries.

**Social Media:** Ah, the blessing and the curse. For those WFH, social media, particularly chat and LinkedIn, keep you connected to your co-workers and friends. Use them liberally, but judiciously. Remember that people can interact differently from face-to-face, phone, email, text, and social media communications. Some of your co-workers won’t be comfortable on one medium or another, and frankly, some will be too comfortable on some media and keep you tied up all morning. Also, it is all too easy to find yourself down the rabbit-hole on “research”. Check out the Digital Nomads and Remote Workers on LI groups on LinkedIn to connect with other “location-independent workers”.

And yes, I am writing this in my pajamas, ya filthy animal.

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