MBTI® preference tips for
remote and virtual working

Many of us are working from home now. And while some people have done this for a long time and might have chosen to do it, many haven't done it before – and now have no choice.

Different personality types have different responses to – and needs from – a remote-working environment. Use these MBTI® preference tips to help you and others preserve well-being and get the best from the virtual workplace.

Extraversion

- Ensure that you can, and you do, connect and communicate frequently with others. Schedule regular informal remote meetings and get-togethers

- Include and connect with your Introverted colleagues too – don't assume they don't want to hear from you!

- Make your home working environment stimulating. For example, play music, or take regular breaks in a different room, or outside, or with your family

- If you need to do focused work, plan the times and find a place where you can avoid distractions

Introversion

- Find a place to work that is quiet and as free from distractions as possible. If you need to block out noise, consider using headphones

- Without people around, you could get too absorbed in your work. Take breaks, have lunch, talk to or message someone

- Allow yourself time to reflect during the day. Perhaps go for a walk, or just move away from your computer

- Don't forget to make time to engage and communicate with your colleagues, especially those with Extraversion preferences

Sensing

- Keep focused on the big picture. Ask for direction if you get lost in details or specifics

- In the initial stages of a crisis, the practical details of what needs to be done might be unclear – but more clarity should come with time

- Some people with a Sensing preference might become fixated on getting the details of their work right, or getting their physical workspace perfect, or find they are snacking too much. Stop, take a break, and ensure you maintain contact with others

- Set aside a specific amount of time for researching or developing a project, and stop and move on when this is over

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Intuition

- Find out which channels are available to communicate your ideas. Make full use of them

- Working remotely, it is easy for ideas to go into a 'black hole'. Follow up, seek feedback, and check there has been action

- There may be a temptation to over-complicate things, piling one idea upon another. Getting together (virtually) with someone with a Sensing preference may help move things forward

- Make full use of online tools for collaboration, brainstorming, and idea generation with others

Thinking

- Without the social cues of face-to-face contact, the online communication of Thinking individuals can be very direct, task-focused, and impersonal. So, don't forget greetings in emails – allow time for social niceties in video or voice conversations

- Misunderstandings can easily occur in remote communication, for many reasons. Don't immediately assume that the other person is incompetent

- State things clearly and persevere when communicating remotely. Without direct contact, you need to bring others along with you in order to achieve your goals

- Make the reasons for the decisions you take clear and allow time for others to comment

Feeling

- Ensure attention is paid to your own needs. These may not be as visible to others when working remotely

- Build on your existing network of relationships to gain co-operation

- Misunderstandings can easily occur in remote communication, for many reasons. Don't immediately assume that the other person has a hidden agenda or is out to get you

- Find ways to make sure that your team and organization celebrate success and show appreciation for effort – including your own contribution

Judging

- If you find you are suddenly and unexpectedly working from home, get into a new home-working routine quickly. Make sure that your organization facilitates this

- Maintain a structured day and set boundaries around working hours to keep 'work' and 'home' separate. If possible, have a separate area or office for work

- Set clear, realistic goals and priorities at the start of each day

- Some of your Perceiving colleagues may begin to adopt more flexible working hours. If you receive an email or IM from them late at night, it's not necessarily urgent!

Perceiving

- Working remotely, it might be difficult to be casually playful or light-hearted with colleagues. Make full use of video conferencing and other media to keep in touch. Be spontaneous

- Keep sight of overall deadlines, but maintain variety day to day – for example, by moving between projects.

- While remaining aware of meetings and other commitments, allow yourself breaks and make use of the flexibility of home working. Go for a walk, bake a cake, do whatever works for you.

- With flexibility comes responsibility. Be respectful of other's working patterns; for example, set a delay if you are sending an email at midnight

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