



Timely Information for Personal Success

Will Working Remotely become the New Norm? (Part I)

By Jill J. Johnson

In an increasingly online world, more and more companies have been allowing employees to work remotely. Working from home can feel more isolating than mingling with co-workers in an office setting, but many of us have had little choice since the Covid-19 pandemic. No doubt many people have been learning that remote work requires a disciplined approach to planning activities and seeking out opportunities to interact with co-workers. Even after things get back to usual, remote work could remain a more common work routine. The following are some guidelines for working remotely.

❖ **Establish a routine:** Just as you have a routine in your normal workday, try to mimic this routine as you work in your remote location. Start your workday at the same time. Make sure you get dressed. Wearing your pajamas might be comfortable, but it does not prepare your mindset for work. It can become easy to get distracted when you are working in a different environment, so focus on *acting* like you're still working in a supervised workplace. This approach will help you *feel* more like you are working.

❖ **Set up a dedicated workspace:** Having an area in your home where you do your work is essential to success. It is easy to become distracted by the dog, television or the pile of household tasks that need to be completed. When you are in your

workspace, you need to be *working*. If you combine work with other chores, it'll be nearly impossible to stay focused.

❖ **Convert commute time to learning time:** The time you used to spend on your commute is now extra time that you can use to enhance your value by learning something new. With the plethora of online courses and videos, you can take advantage of this "commute time" to enhance your skills.

❖ **Take a lunch break:** One of the most challenging aspects about working remotely is that it becomes easy to just sit at your desk and eat your lunch. In a normal work environment, you have to go somewhere and often wait to get your food. At home, your lunch time could drop from an hour to

continued on Page 2





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Healthy Recipe: Black Bean Breakfast Bowl

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 avocado, peeled and sliced
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
- ¼ cup salsa

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 625
- Protein: 27.9 g.
- Carbohydrates: 46.6 g.
- Sodium: 1,158 mg.
- Fat: 38.8 g.

DIRECTIONS:

- ➊ Heat olive oil in a small pan over medium heat. Cook and stir eggs until eggs are set, 3 to 5 minutes.
- ➋ Place black beans in a microwave-safe bowl. Heat on High in the microwave until warm, about 1 minute.
- ➌ Divide warmed black beans between two bowls.
- ➍ Top each bowl with scrambled eggs, avocado, and salsa.

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 Website: writeitrightllc.com
 Email: mjacquart@writeitrightllc.com

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Questions and Answers

Precautions for Covid-19

Q: *What are some precautions you recommend in light of the coronavirus pandemic?*

A: Use disinfectant wipes at stores when they are available, including wiping the handle and child seat in grocery carts. Wash your hands with soap for 10-20 seconds and/or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60% alcohol or more, whenever you return home from any activity where other people have been. If possible, cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue and discard. Use your elbow only if you have to. The clothing on your elbow will contain infectious virus that can be passed on for up to a week or more.

Stock up on zinc lozenges, which have been proven to be effective in blocking coronavirus (and most other viruses) from multiplying in your throat. Use as directed several times each day when you begin to feel ANY “cold-like” symptoms.

Source: James Robb, MD, FCAP, a molecular virologist and former professor of pathology at the University of California San Diego.

Working Remotely...

continued from Page 1

15 minutes. Use the extra time to get in your workout or engage in some other activity to benefit your health. Giving yourself a solid break during the day will help reinvigorate you and give you a mental boost.

❖ **Connect with others:** When you are feeling a little lonely or isolated, take a minute to reach out to someone. Rather than sending a lengthy email, see if a colleague is available to talk over the phone or via Skype to talk about a project. If they are working remotely, they might welcome the human contact! Connections like these build team bonds and help sustain you when working remotely. It also offers you additional opportunities to dig deeper into issues and brainstorm alternative solutions to critical issues.

❖ **Leverage opportunities for productivity:** You will likely discover you are more productive without all of the interruptions common during an office workday. The lack of interruptions and distractions create additional opportunities for you to not only be more efficient, but also to be even more *productive*. Leverage this productivity and tackle that special project you were hoping to get done someday. That someday is now! Just make sure it is a one-off project, not a permanent addition to your job responsibilities. ■

NEXT MONTH: More remote work suggestions are presented.

Jill J. Johnson is the President and Founder of Johnson Consulting Services, a highly accomplished speaker, an award-winning management consultant, and author of the bestselling book “Compounding Your Confidence.” For more information, visit www.jcs-usa.com.