

# Tips and tricks for being more productive at work

Work smarter and achieve more in less time with these top productivity tricks

## Environment

Productivity isn't only reliant on your internal mood. The flare of inspiration you woke up with can easily fizzle away if you don't have a suitable place to settle into and focus in.

### Get comfortable

If you need to be at a computer for most of the day, try to adjust your equipment and posture like this:

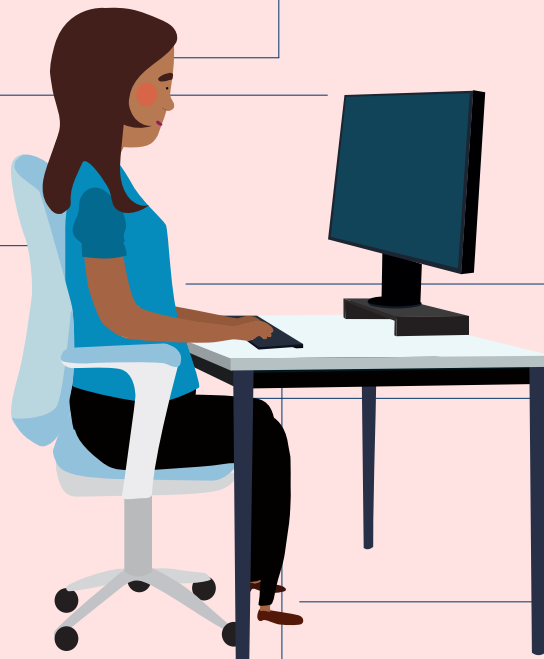
Arms relaxed by your side



Balanced head, not leaning forward



Screen approximately arm's length from you



Sit back in the chair with back rest adjusted suitably

Top of screen about eye level



Forearms parallel to desk



Feet supported on the floor or on a footrest



## Be clever with your surroundings

You can reduce your risk of musculoskeletal injury simply by arranging the equipment on your desk into zones based on how frequently you use it:



## Deal with noise

If you can't focus, use noise-cancelling headphones or ear plugs. If possible, work from home, or ask your manager about moving to a quieter spot in the office.



**1/3**

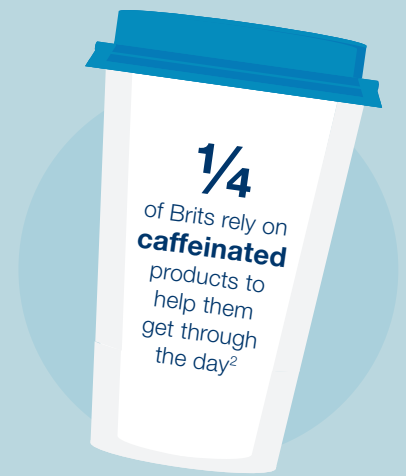
of office workers say  
excessive office noise makes  
them feel **disengaged**  
with work<sup>1</sup>

# Wellbeing

You're not a robot - simply going through the motions won't necessarily make you more productive. It's important you feel well in yourself first.

## Get plenty of sleep

Often, it's a vicious cycle. You lay awake at night ruminating over everything you have to do or haven't done at work. The next day you're sleep-deprived and groggy, which can lead to:



Poor concentration



Greater risk-taking behaviour



Poor mood



Poor memory

Getting a better night's sleep is easier said than done, but you can try this:



Limit blue light-emitting technology before bed



Listen to a guided meditation



Don't consume caffeine in the evening



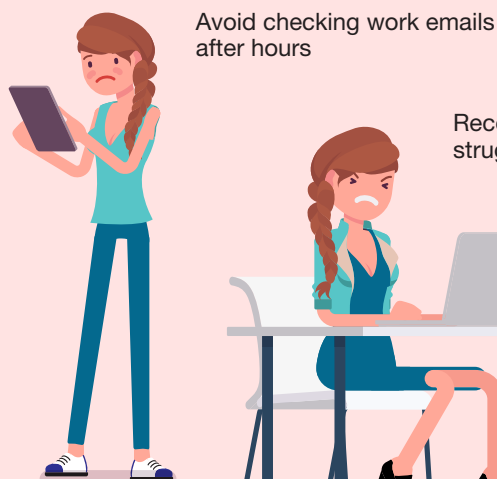
Have a bedtime routine so your brain knows when it's time to wind down

## Check your work-life balance

Time spent working doesn't necessarily translate as productivity. Forcing yourself to stay late at the office because that's what your boss does doesn't mean you're going to be in the right mindset to complete your tasks effectively. Try to:



Learn how and when to say no



Avoid checking work emails after hours



Recognise if you're struggling to cope



Maintain perspective — reflect on what's important in life

# Take care of your mental health

It can feel difficult to work productively when you're experiencing any sort of health issue, but when it comes to mental health it can be even tougher because of the stigma involved.



Make your manager aware of what's going on



Find out if there are any services available to you like subsidised counselling



Seek help from online forums, support groups and professionals



Ask for flexibility in hours and working location



Find coping mechanisms that work for you



Admit when you're not going to be productive

## Healthy habits

It's often the small things we do every day that determine how sharp and on-the-ball we feel.

### Take plenty of breaks

A microbreak is a 30 second to two-minute break taken frequently throughout the working day.

#### Taking a microbreak:

Gives your brain a rest



Increases accuracy



Increases oxygen and blood circulation



Disrupts poor postures



Allows time to process memories



Avoids mental and physical fatigue



Boosts feelings of positivity

Lowers risk of aches and pains

Improves engagement

# Eat healthily

What is the relationship between what you eat and how well you perform at work?

**Here's what the science suggests:**



Eating high-carb foods (like bread and pasta) triggers an insulin release, which in turn floods the brain with serotonin - the sleep-triggering hormone. It's hard to do your best work when you're craving a nap.<sup>4</sup>



Scientists have found that we're less likely to resist impulses when glucose levels are low. Sugary snacks create a spike and drop in blood-sugar, which may make procrastination harder to resist.<sup>5</sup>

To feel alert, focused and energised enough to work productively, eat plenty of nutrient-rich vegetables, protein and slow-release carbohydrates (like wholegrains). Avoid sugary snacks and carb overloads.

## Good

- ✓ Veg/fruit
- ✓ Wholegrain carbs
- ✓ Protein - beans, fish and chicken

## Bad

- ✗ Sugary snacks/fizzy pop
- ✗ Bad fat (crisps, chips etc)
- ✗ White carbs like bread

# Boost activity levels

In the short term, insufficient exercise can impact productivity by making us feel restless or sluggish. In the long term it can lead to painful musculoskeletal disorders, weight gain and weight-related health problems like diabetes, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease.

## Lack of activity can make us feel:



Sluggish/cloudy headed



Uncomfortable



Achy



Restless

## How to boost your activity levels at work:



Use a sit-stand desk to move between sitting and standing



Go for a walk at lunch



Work out before work



Try agile working (working between different environments throughout the day)

# Process and flow

Write and prioritise a to-do list

Don't let your inbox be your to-do list

Use an online to-do list and check off as you go

Set yourself deadlines

Tackle short tasks first to get them out of the way

Set time away from distractions to focus on big tasks

Don't multitask - this can reduce the quality of your work

Learn when you're most productive - this might not always be between 9 and 5

Productivity fluctuates day to day and person to person. Making sure you're comfortable is a great first step. You can find products and resources to help you on [posturite.co.uk](http://posturite.co.uk).



<sup>1</sup>BBC Worklife

<sup>2</sup>Independent Newspaper

<sup>3</sup>Centre for Mental Health

<sup>4</sup>NCBI, Brain serotonin, carbohydrate-craving, obesity and depression

<sup>5</sup>NCBI, The physiology of willpower: linking blood glucose to self-control