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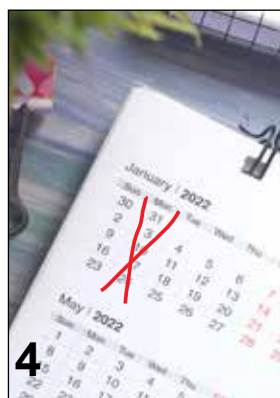The World's Largest Website for Executive PAs, Secretaries, Administrators & Office Managers

As an office worker, where do you go for information, advice, tutorials, vital tools, training and relaxation?

DeskDemon is the world's largest resource, information and community site for Administrative Professionals, Executive PAs, secretaries, Administrators and Office Managers. Providing essential information, resources, tips, tricks, tools, quick links, templates, editorial features and best practice on all the daily tasks the secretarial community perform – from travel, meetings, conferences and events to managing technology, office supplies, people and their careers.

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5 4 DAY WEEK

The pros and cons of the four-day week

We all love a 3-day weekend; bank holidays are always a cause for excitement. But what if you scrapped the traditional 5-day week and made this the norm? Would your business soar? Or would productivity take a hit? So, what's the case for a four-day week?

There is an argument to be made that modern technology has significantly sped up the way we work, and that the five-day week is no longer necessary.

For example, cloud HR software means that long-winded spreadsheets are no longer needed and faffing around with paperwork is a thing of the past.

Whilst the five-day week used to be a great model that got the most out of its workers, it was born in an era where factory work was the norm. In a 19th century factory, a 5-day week was ideal. People would get up, go to work, do their jobs and go home. That was all there was to it.

However, with the evolution of technology and the increase in office jobs, the rule that longer hours equals more productivity doesn't necessarily ring true.

Recent trials of a four-day working week in Iceland have been reportedly successful.

Microsoft's Japan offices also trialled it and saw a whopping 40% increase in productivity. It's also proved successful in countries like New Zealand and Sweden.

Closer to home, many British businesses have also trialled the four-day week concept, with hopes to get the same level of output in fewer hours of work.

Advantages of a four-day working week

So, how do you know if a four-day week is right for your business? To help you decide, here are some key pros and cons.

Reduced costs

A four-day week can cut costs for everyone.

The obvious one is that, given the office would be closed for one extra day a week, running costs would see a significant drop.

Additionally, employees would be paying less to commute and would see cut costs in expenses like lunch and coffees during the day, too.

Happier employees

Having a three-day weekend leaves employees with more free time. Not many people will complain about that.Having more time to do the things you love increases overall happiness and can help to increase loyalty to a company - it's a win-win.

Fewer health issues

According to charity Mind, 1 in 6 of us experience mental health problems in any given week.Having a longer weekend will allow people to spend more time with their friends and family and do things that they love, which will naturally lead to an improvement in wellbeing.

It'll also give them an extra lie-in each week which will help them re-charge a little more after a busy week.

Increase in productivity levels

Discontented staff tend to distract their co-workers. The general theory behind a shorter week is that happier, more fulfilled employees are therefore more focused on their job when actually in the workplace.

Perpetual Guardian, a New Zealand firm trialled a four day week. The results found that 78% of employees could more effectively balance their work and home life. This was compared to 54% prior to the experiment.

Recruitment and retention

In the age of the millennial, being able to offer a more flexible work pattern is definitely a perk that persuades employees to stay at a company.

Knowing they'll be getting a three-day weekend is one that keeps employees motivated week-on-week. It's still a relatively rare offering and can be a great way to get the best talent through the door - and keep them engaged, too.

Disadvantages of a 4-day work week

It doesn't suit every business model

Unfortunately, a four-day week model doesn't suit every business. It's an option that is only viable for companies who can re-adapt their whole business to a new way of working.

Adopting a different way of working is a big step, so you'll need to consider whether or not a four-day week is right for your company.

Longer hours and work-related stress

In reality, most employees on a four day week will most likely be expected to work the same 40-hour weeks, but in four days instead of five. In this case, shifts might be extended to 10 hours. Longer days could have a significant effect on employees' stress levels and therefore their overall wellbeing and productivity.

How does a four-day week affect holiday entitlement?

One of the first things employees might ask is: how does this affect my holiday entitlement? Well, as you probably know, an employer can

set their own rules on holiday, and can choose to give more than the legal minimum should they want to.

If you switch to a four-day week and keep the standard 37.5 hour working week (ie. you condense 5 days into 4), your employees' holiday allowance won't change. No sweat.

But, if you actually reduce the amount of hours your people are working each week, you'll need to re-calculate the holiday they're entitled to. And here's how you do it.

• Leave allowance is calculated simply by multiplying the number of days worked a week by 5.6.

• A five-day week entitles 28 days' annual leave a year.

• So, someone working a four-day week would be entitled to: 4 days x 5.6 weeks = 22.4 days.

Should work become more flexible?

The pandemic has proved to many businesses (that might have previously felt reluctant to allow their staff to work remotely) that a virtual workplace can be successful, prompting calls from many employees to maintain some element of remote working in future.

And it's not just employees who are leading the calls; some notable companies have also

gone on the record and stated that they're going to push for a more flexible way of working.

One employer who's taken this stance is PwC, who are not only calling for a change in where we work, but also in when we work. The consultancy firm has won headlines by announcing that, once restrictions are eased, their employees will be able to dictate whether they work remotely or in-person, as well as the hours that they want to work.

However, not all businesses are on board with this new way of working. In February, the CEO of Goldman Sachs, David Soloman, dismissed the idea that the future of working will be virtual, berating it as an 'aberration that we're going to correct as soon as possible'.

The stark contrast between the two companies shows that no one is really sure what the future will look like for UK employees in a post-pandemic world.

Creating structures to manage blended working

If your area of business permits it, the likelihood is that most of your staff will opt for a blend between office and home working when we return to the workplace. To ensure that this happens successfully, it's going to be up to business owners, managers and HR professionals to put in place the necessary structures.

This will include practicalities, such as:

- making sure that employees whose areas of business are heavily reliant upon each other overlap

- deciding how many days per week you're

going to need your staff to be in your place of work

- ensuring there are enough resources available (work stations, equipment etc) for the rota that you decide on.

Ultimately, with the right arrangements in place, as well as a collaborative approach between you and your staff and effective communication, you should be able to manage the return to work effectively to ensure an engaged, happy, productive workforce.

Sophie Forrest runs Forrest HR, which provides HR, training and development and health and wellbeing support to small and medium-sized businesses across the South East and London. She was named Female Entrepreneur of the Year 2020 in the SME News Southern Enterprise Awards, with ForrestHR named Best Emerging HR Consultancy Firm 2020.

Is a four-day week right for your business?

It remains to be seen whether a 4-day week is the solution to the changing 21st century workplace or not.

But, what is certain is that small businesses will have to keep an open mind.

They'll need to ensure they accommodate increasing changes in technology from a business perspective, whilst keeping the overall focus on employee health and wellbeing to maintain productivity, morale and engagement.

www.breathehr.com

Ransomware: How to Protect Your Business

Cost estimates for the impact of ransomware on businesses and government organisations around the world vary massively. One problem is that according to some cyber security analysts, less than 50% of ransomware attacks are reported as organisations prefer not to go public to protect their brand credibility.

UK ransomware facts and figures

According to some estimates, the global number of ransomware attacks in 2021 had hit over 300 million by the midpoint of the year, compared to a similar number for the whole of 2020.

While most of these attempts targeted the USA a significant number were aimed at UK businesses, charities, schools, hospitals and other public sector organisations.

Bottom line: the threat of ransomware is very serious, constant and growing, requiring every time of organisation to take protective measures against it.

What is ransomware

Ransomware is a computer programme that gets into your network and then encrypts files and data on computers and servers so they cannot be used without the key.

Once in place, the hacker holds the data 'hostage', demanding payment in the form of a 'ransom' to release the files using a decryption key.

Ransomware can happen to anyone and is widely employed to attack businesses, universities and healthcare systems. Indeed during 2020, Duesseldorf University Hospital's care systems were disabled hospital by a ransomware attack, resulting in the death of a patient died.

Cases of ransomware that emerged in 2021 include Lemonduck, REvil, Trickbot, Dridex, Conti and Cobalt Strike.

What damage does ransomware cause?

Unlike other computer viruses that can be removed or prevented by anti-virus software after getting on to a computer, the only way to remove ransomware is to pay the ransom (usually in Bitcoin or other crypto currency) and then hope and pray that the hacker sends you the key to unlock your files.

The impacts of ransomware fall into the following categories:

Direct cost: lost sales while network systems are down.

Lost customers: according to Forrester, 38% of companies say they lost customers following a cybersecurity breach – including ransomware attacks.
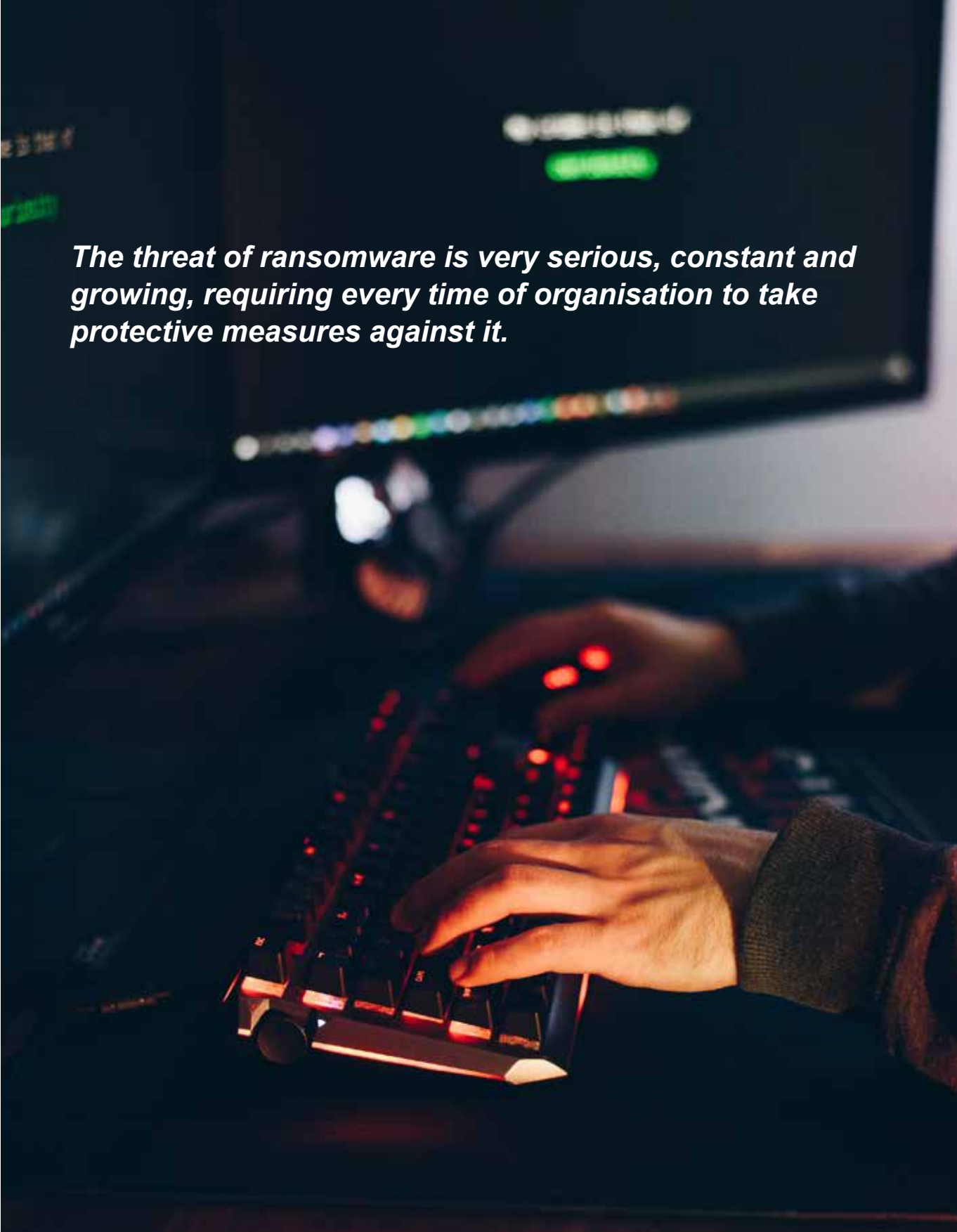
Remediation: the average cost of remediation following a successful ransomware attack to UK companies can be up to £1million according to some sources.

Reputation damage: impossible to measure, but a publicised ransomware incident affects potential buyers' view of a brand, impacting negatively on their potential to purchase from that company.

Worst case scenario: the crippling down time for an entire organisation can potentially lead to loss of life, as was the case in Germany.

How does a ransomware attack succeed?

Many of the 'vectors' or channels through which malware including ransomware is distributed are incredibly simple. The most common channel is email, where infected links or files such as Word or Excel documents may be clicked and/or opened.

The threat of ransomware is very serious, constant and growing, requiring every time of organisation to take protective measures against it.

Often, multiple conditions may be required for a ransomware attack to succeed. It doesn't only boil down to a lack of cybersecurity systems and software.

Lagging policy updates, out of date software, a lack of training or education resulting in poor end-user vigilance – even a lapse in concentration can result in success for the hacker.

The definition of success for the cybercriminal however is simply to gain access to a network, steal data and "hold it hostage" pending payment of the ransom. The documented evidence of ransomware payments is, however, scarce because so few companies own up to it.

The key in all of this is that criminals target what they perceive to be "the weakest link" in the chain: the employees of the business – including those at executive level.

How to protect against ransomware

The number one rule in protecting against ransomware and any other kind of cyberattack is never to assume it won't happen to you. In fact, assume you will be targeted. Other key measures include:

1. Back up your data

A robust backup system for all systems – including email – is a core form of protection. If your data can be backed up and, crucially, restored effectively and efficiently, then you can be up and running again in a relatively short period – and critical operational processes can resume.

Depending on the size of your organisation, you'll need a full back up plan and potentially

system redundancy to ensure continuity. Don't assume that because your data is stored in the cloud it's all immune from a ransomware attack.

2. Don't rely on anti-virus alone!

Deploy a modern security MDR (Managed Detection and Response) software solution such as SentinelOne. MDR software monitors the behaviour of processes running on all endpoints, looking for any suspicious activity that could indicate a security breach such as a ransomware attack. It then blocks the attack and raises automated alerts.

Artificial Intelligence such as SentinelOne's patented behavioural technology protects every endpoint through the threat lifecycle including:

- Pre-execution: attack prevention

- On-execution: detecting and containing threats

- Post-execution: visibility & response, remediation and rollback.

SentinelOne can block many attacks automatically on its own. But for a complete solution, human input may be required via Security Operation Centres (SOCs) to:

- Isolate an affected computer from the network while maintaining control of it remotely

- Suspend potentially compromised user accounts

- Carry out detailed security investigations

- Remove the suspected threat

- Rollback the state of a computer if it has already been compromised

- Return the computer to safe operation.

3. Train employees in good computer security habits

Cyber-awareness training is a useful took in the battle against ransomware.

Staff should be trained on how to spot suspicious emails, links and attachments and avoid clicking or opening anything that looks like it may not be genuine. They should also understand the importance of not sharing passwords and of using only strong, unique passwords.

4. Develop a disaster recovery plan

If all else fails, get a comprehensive DR plan in place. As well as the key infrastructure such as cloud technologies, cybersecurity, remote management and IT systems support, you'll need a well drilled plan and procedure to ensure that all the critical elements of your IT can be brought back into operation quickly and effectively, and that your people will know exactly what to do.

www.alliancesolutions.co.uk

Top tips for staying well at work
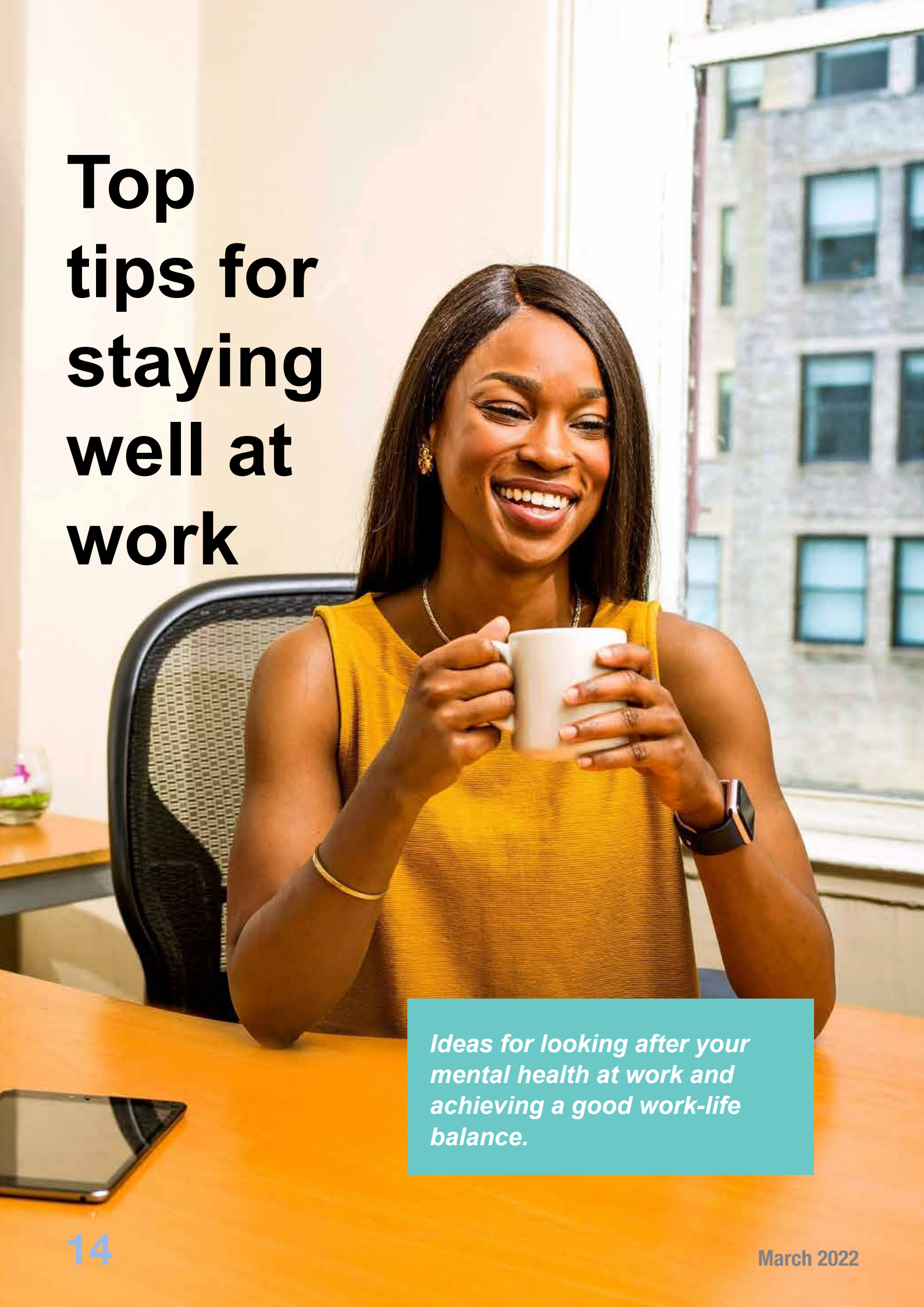
Ideas for looking after your mental health at work and achieving a good work-life balance.

Reclaim your lunch break

Why not make the most of that precious hour – or half hour – by trying some of these suggestions...

Organise a picnic

Take advantage of the summer sun and make the most of clean air and good food with your colleagues.

Hold a group activity

If there's a green space near your workplace why not organise a game of rounders or football, hold a guerrilla gardening session, or a group walk? Take time to enjoy the outdoors and get re-energised for an afternoon of productive work.

Take up a challenge

Local sponsored walks or marathons are a great way to keep active. Sign with your colleagues and train together during lunch breaks. Participating as part of a team can give a communal sense of achievement when you complete the challenge. You could even support Mind's work by signing up to one of our running events.

Whistle while you work

If you're feeling stressed, listening to a calming song can take your mind off work for a few minutes and help you unwind and refocus. Research has found slow, quiet music can encourage relaxation and reduce anxiety.

When you're working hard to complete a task, music can also help eliminate distractions around you. By blocking out the noise of your fellow workers, machinery or bleeping phones you can focus easier on the task at hand.

Listen to your favourite song as a simple treat to yourself. Rewarding yourself is a great way for your general wellbeing, giving you some added motivation so you can better tackle a big workload.

Getting the work-life balance right

Are you often the last to leave work?

We know you'll have times when you need to work overtime to meet deadlines, but try to make this the exception not the norm. Long hours means you may be working harder, but not better – they'll quickly take their toll on your concentration, productiveness and health.

Create clear boundaries between work and home

Try not to let work spill over into your personal life. If you need to bring work home, designate a separate area for work and stick to it, you'll find it much easier to then close the door on work.

Start a To Do list

At the end of each day, go over your list and write up one for the next day, when your thoughts are down on paper, you'll find it easier to not think about work.

Use the time on your commute home to wind down from work

Read a book or listen to your music to set aside some time to yourself. Maybe try cycling part of your journey or getting off a stop early to take a shortcut through a park or quiet streets. These little actions can really help you to switch off.

Ask for help

If you feel your workload is spiralling out of control, take opportunity to discuss it with your manager or supervisor. If you can't resolve the problem of unrealistic goals, organisation problems or deadlines in this way, talk to your personnel department, trade union representative or other relevant members of staff.

Five steps to wellbeing

The new economics foundation pinpointed five essential steps to improving wellbeing on a daily basis. They're a great way to start thinking about how you can improve your daily working life.

Five ways to wellbeing

The following steps have been researched and developed by the New Economics Foundation. Let us know us what you think about them and how you look after your wellbeing on Facebook.

Connect

There is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need.

It's clear that social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages.

With this in mind, try to do something different today and make a connection.

- Talk to someone instead of sending an email
- Speak to someone new
- Ask how someone's weekend was and really listen when they tell you

- Put five minutes aside to find out how someone really is
- Give a colleague a lift to work or share the journey home with them.

Be active

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups. Exercise is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting well-being.

But it doesn't need to be particularly intense for you to feel good - slower-paced activities, such as walking, can have the benefit of encouraging social interactions as well providing some level of exercise.

Today, why not get physical? Here are a few ideas:

- Take the stairs not the lift
- Go for a walk at lunchtime
- Walk into work - perhaps with a colleague – so you can 'connect' as well
- Get off the bus one stop earlier than usual and walk the final part of your journey to work
- Organise a work sporting activity
- Have a kick-about in a local park
- Do some 'easy exercise', like stretching, before you leave for work in the morning
- Walk to someone's desk instead of calling or emailing.

Take notice

Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness.

Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities.

Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you. Here are a few ideas:

- Get a plant for your workspace

- Have a 'clear the clutter' day

- Take notice of how your colleagues are feeling or acting

- Take a different route on your journey to or from work

- Visit a new place for lunch.

Learn

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities particularly helps to lift older people out of depression.

The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.Why not learn something new today? Here are a few more ideas:

- Find out something about your colleagues

- Sign up for a class

- Read the news or a book

- Set up a book club

- Do a crossword or Sudoku

- Research something you've always wondered about

- Learn a new word.

Give

Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing.

www.mind.org.uk

New driving laws and rules for 2022

To capitalise on the active travel boom, the government has changed the Highway Code so that cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians feel safer on the road.

Some of the changes include:

- A hierarchy of road users that prioritises at-risk road users like cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians.

- Improving pedestrian priority on pavements when crossing or waiting to cross the road.

- Guidance on passing cyclists and horse riders safely. This includes safe passing distances and speed. Cyclists also have priority at junctions when travelling straight ahead.

The government explains that, 'road users who can do the greatest harm have the greatest responsibility to reduce the danger they may pose to others'.

Stricter rules on mobile phone use in vehicles

The government is tightening up the rules on mobile phone use behind the wheel.

In 2021, motorists could only be penalised for communicating on their phone behind the wheel. For example, calling or sending a text.

The new rule, which could start early this year, will penalise drivers for touching their phones behind the wheel.

This means using your phone for gaming, taking selfies and scrolling through playlists will be illegal. Drivers could receive a fine of £200 and six points on their licence if they're caught.

But there are some exceptions.

Drivers should still be able to use their phone as a sat nav as long as it's secured in a mobile phone holder. You'll have to pull over and stop when it's safe if you want to adjust your route though.

Local councils could enforce minor traffic offences instead of police

Motorists could be fined up to £70 by local councils for minor motoring offences. For example, stopping in yellow cross hatching and driving in cycle lanes. Before the rule change, the police were responsible for issuing these fines.

All motorists banned from parking on pavements

Councils in England and Wales could have the power to issue fines for motorists that park on the pavement.

The new rules could mean that councils UK wide could issue £70 fines for pavement parkers.

Speed limiters from 6 July 2022

In 2022, speed limiters will be mandatory in all new cars.

The speed limiter – known as an Intelligent Speed Assistant system (ISA) – alerts drivers if they're going too fast. If the driver doesn't slow their speed the car will intervene.

Five-year delay on new smart motorways

The government will pause smart motorways for five years for a full safety review.

The five-year pause will give the government and the Department for Transport time to collect in depth data on the safety of smart motorways.

Driving licences to be taken off drug users

In December 2021, the prime minister announced that passports and driving licences could be removed from illegal drug users.

The government could also introduce harsher sentences for offenders. This is part of a wider 10-year plan to tackle illegal drug-related crime.

Self-driving cars allowed on UK roads

Automatic Lane Keeping Systems (ALKS) keep cars in lane automatically at low speeds. And for the first time, drivers will be able to delegate control of the vehicle.

In 2021, the government announced that ALK systems are an example of 'self-driving' vehicle technology.

The Association of British Insurers has debated this, saying it could potentially be misleading for drivers.

By declaring the system as self-driving, drivers might feel they can switch off behind the wheel. In reality, they still need to be able to regain control of the vehicle at any time.

Electric car grant cut

There is increasing pressure on drivers to switch to electric cars, which isn't easy given that the initial cost for an EV is £20,000 upwards.

The government's electric car grant went some way towards making them affordable. But in December 2021, it reduced the grant.

Now, the grant has been cut from £2,500 to £1,000 and will only be available for vehicles costing up to £32,000. You could previously apply the grant to vehicles up to £35,000.

Nurses to be able to determine if you're fit to drive - rather than just doctors

The government is considering allowing nurse practitioners to conduct medical questionnaires to determine if you're fit to drive. Previously, only GPs were allowed to do this. This change could help to speed up driving licence renewal applications, and decrease the workload on already stretched doctors.

New homes to have EV charging points fitted by law in 2022

Infrastructure around charging points has been a barrier for people considering switching EVs.

But this year all new builds in England will have to install EV charging points. This will be a legal requirement.

The new charging points should be installed in new-build homes, new supermarkets and any other building that's having major renovations.

Ban on red diesel and rebated biofuel

To help the UK reach its climate target, on 1 April 2022, the government will restrict the use of red diesel and biofuel in some vehicles.

The red diesel ban will mainly affect businesses rather than individuals. Usually, this type of fuel is used for agricultural machinery, for example in tractors or ploughs.

The ban could mean that businesses resort to using cleaner fuel options to power their vehicles.

www.confused.com

Working From Home?
How to keep work from taking over your personal life

Working from home can be amazing. But when your home is also your office, separating your work life and your personal life can be a challenge. And without that separation, it can be easy for work to start spreading throughout your home and invading the rest of your life, making it hard to disengage and spend time on other things that really matter (like your family, friends, hobbies, and life).

Why Separating Your Work Life and Home Life Is So Important

First things first – before we talk about how to keep your work life from infringing on your personal life when you work from home, let's talk about why, exactly, that's so important.

It Helps You Avoid Burnout

"People can't work 24/7. They need to have other things going on in their life," says Kim Perkins, organizational psychologist and Chief Behavioral Scientist at work and culture consulting firm NOBL. According to Perkins, that always-working attitude can cause a variety of negative outcomes, including sleep issues, relationship problems, and burnout.

Taking time away from work can give your mind and body the time you need to rest, recover, and give the other areas of your life (like your sleep) the attention they deserve – and when you get back to work, you'll have renewed energy to get things done.

It Lets You Unwind

Your home is supposed to be a place to relax – but for people who work from home, that can be a challenge.

"We have evolved to pay close attention to surroundings that we're in – and that gives us cues about how we're supposed to act," says Perkins. So if everywhere and everything in your house reminds you of work, you're going to feel like you need to work all the time and you're not going to be able to get the rest and relaxation you need to feel your best. For example, working in bed might feel comfortable, but if you start to associate your bed with your work, it will be harder for your brain to relax and go to sleep.

Creating a clear sense of separation between work life and home life, both physically and psychologically, can make it easier for you to shut down and relax at the end of the work day.

It's Good for the People in Your Life

If you're unattached or live alone, the person who's going to be impacted most by your work-life balance is you. If you have a family, things get a little more complicated.

You need to be able to shut off and give the people closest to you the time and attention they deserve; otherwise, your work can have a seriously negative impact on your relationships. "A lot of people who work from home...are constantly checking their phone [and working]," says Perkins. "That's going to make the partner [and family] feel a lot less listened to and a lot less valued."

Tips to Keep Your Work From Messing With Your Personal Life

Clearly, keeping your work life from infringing on your personal life is a must if you want to feel happy, healthy, and balanced. But how, exactly, do you do that? Here are a few tips from people who've made it work.

1. Work Parallel Schedules

When you work from home – and do so around the clock – it can feel like you and your family are ships passing in the night. The best way to combat that? Keeping similar schedules.

"I work on my business while my husband is at work. That gives me 10 hours to do my
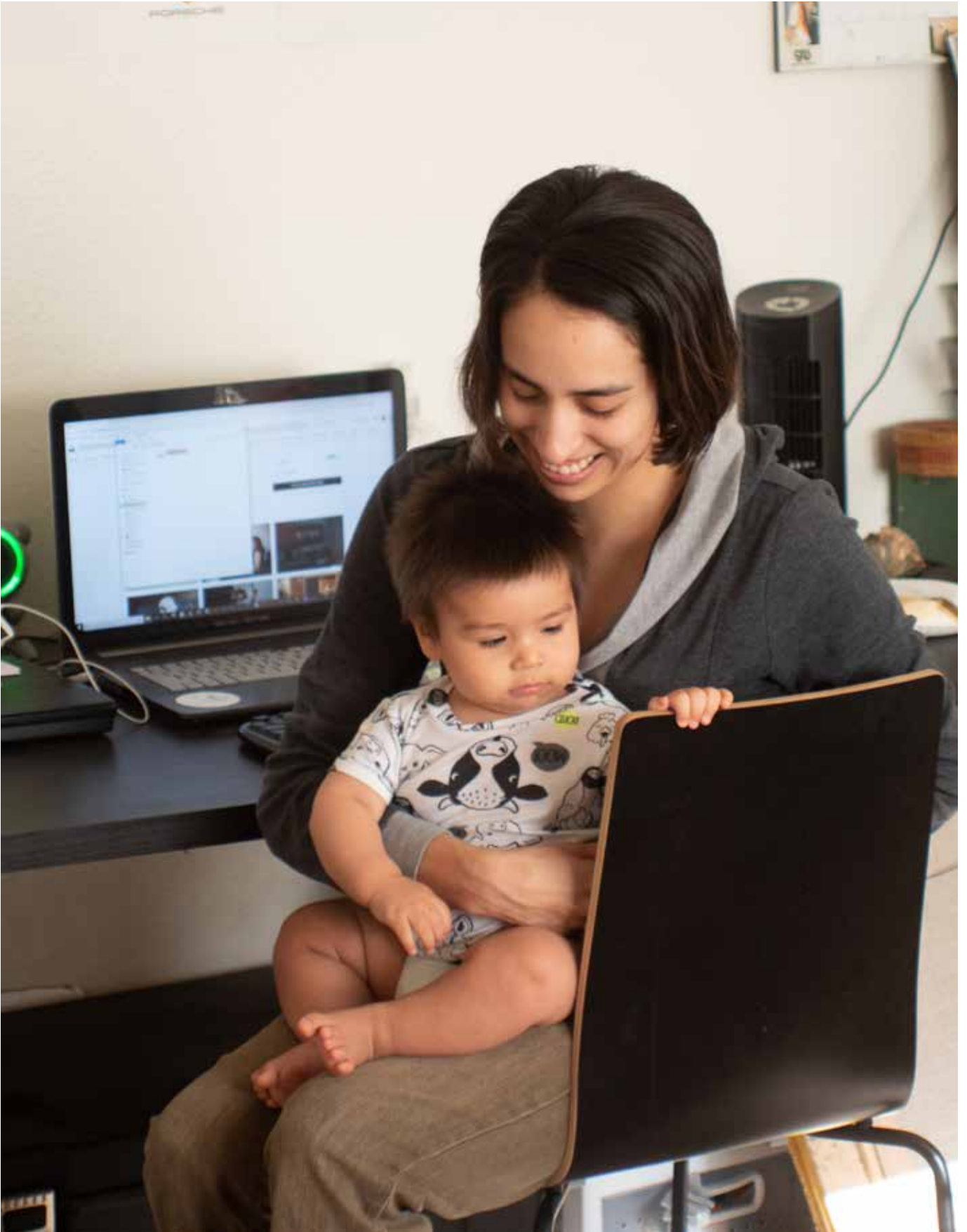
thing," says Anna Kat Napier, founder of Boss Girl Launch Pad. "I need to be able to stop my work when he gets home so that we can catch up with each other and spend dinnertime together."

If you live with a partner or children, it's important to spend some dedicated time with them rather than always splitting your attention between family and work obligations. Scheduling parallel hours (for example, cranking out work while your kids are at school or during the same hours your spouse or significant other is at their job) will allow you to get things done but still have time to connect with your family members when they get home.

"That kind of alignment shows your spouse [or family members] that you care about them," says Perkins, and are making it a priority to have time together without distractions. Just keep in mind that working parallel schedules only works if you focus on work when it's work time and are ready and willing to shut down when it's over.

2. Set a Firm Stopping Point

It can be easy to lose track of time when you're working from home. And when you finally take a breather and look at the clock, somehow hours have passed – and you've worked far longer than you intended. It's so easy to tell yourself "just five more minutes" or "just one more email." But working crazy hours can throw your body out of whack.

"Your body is used to operating on a schedule," says Perkins. "Kids get up at the same time, they go to school at the same time, and this builds these rhythms and habits – and it's very easy to know what you're supposed

to be doing and when you're supposed to be doing it," she adds. "Even as adults, we need that for a sense of consistency – because otherwise it just takes too long to figure out where we are and what we're supposed to be doing." Setting a firm stopping point every day – and sticking to it – can help you keep your work in check (and keep it from infringing on the things you want and need to get done after work).

3. Have a Trigger to End the Work Day (and Start Personal Time)

Triggers (or cues) can be a powerful way to form new habits. Having a routine that you do every day when you finish work will send a signal to your body and brain that work is officially over – and it's time to move on and enjoy your personal time.

"At the end of the day, I make a to-do list for tomorrow before shutting down my computer and walking downstairs," says Megan Winkler, the owner of Limelight Visibility Marketing. "For me, it's the virtual equivalent to the separation that a commute home gives."

What you do as a routine to trigger the end of work time and start of personal time is up to you. My end-of-day routine is to take my dog for a walk around our neighborhood, but you can do a five-minute meditation, clean up your office, or, like Winkler, organize your tasks into a to-do list for the following day.

What you do is less important than doing it every day. The routine "establishes a habit that 'after I do this, I'm going to relax.' And so it creates some separation between your work self and your personal self," says Perkins. "And you need this in order to, again, fully relax [and] get your mind on other things."

4. Shut the Office Door

Ever heard the saying "out of sight, out of mind?" Well, that also applies to your work space.

If you use a dedicated room as your home office, step away at the end of the day and leave all your work gear, like your laptop and work phone, behind. In other words, literally and figuratively shut the door on work so that you can pursue personal projects, family time, or just good, old-fashioned relaxing without feeling the pull of the office.

If you don't have an enclosed workspace, no worries! You can create some physical separation with a screen or a well-placed bookshelf. And if that's not an option either, just cleaning up your ongoing work can help you avoid the pull of your desk. According to Perkins, many people leave their work out in plain sight, making it harder to disconnect. Clearing off your desk and putting your work out of view (for example, putting your laptop and any loose papers in a desk drawer) can help you create a visual and psychological sense of separation – even if you can't physically close off your workspace from the rest of your home.

5. Schedule Screen-Free Time

Having a set time when phones, laptops, tablets, and TV screens are a no-go allows you to fully disconnect from your work and digital life – and fully engage with your real life.

When you work from home, it's so easy to be tuned into work 24/7. But remember, your home is your home first – and your office second. And if you want to have the work-life balance you crave (and deserve!), you need to treat it that way.

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