



CHECKLIST — WORKING FROM HOME —

Are you working from home?

Maybe you've worked from home for a long time (for me, it's been about 10 years), or maybe this is a brand new experience for you.

Whether you're a seasoned pro at working from home, or a newbie, here are some suggestions on how to set yourself up for a **calm, focused, and successful workday**.

A few suggestions for using this checklist:

- If possible, print it out. Check things off as you go along.
- Please don't feel pressured to complete the entire checklist in one day. Maybe you want to check off three items today, then another two or three tomorrow. Go at your own pace.
- Know that everything on this checklist is a gentle suggestion, not a command. Trust your "**hut**" (heart + gut) to make decisions. Different things work for different people, so please do whatever feels right for you.

CHECKLIST

— WORKING FROM HOME —

SET UP YOUR WORKSPACE

[] **Declutter your desk**, table, counter, or wherever you're working. Clear out old papers, invoices, receipts, that sad withered plant that's hasn't been watered in weeks, and other forms of visual noise. Anything that feels draining or distracting—clear it out.

[] **Add some inspiration to your workspace.** A framed photo of your beloved grandma, your kids, your team, or your favorite clients or students. A healthy plant. Flowers. Candles. Inspirational books. Anything that helps you feel a little more positive and energized.

[] **Gather your supplies** and put everything in your workspace ahead of time. Do you need a notebook, markers, a fully charged laptop, noise-cancelling headphones, or something else? In the culinary world, this is called *mise en place*—setting up in advance, putting things in their proper place. A chef can't do her best work with dull knives and an empty pantry. Set yourself up for success by gathering whatever supplies you need.

ORGANIZE YOUR TIME

[] **Choose specific hours** when you'll be working and taking breaks. For instance: *Work time: 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Break time (walk, workout, meditate, lunch): 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. Second round of work: 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.*

[] **Track your work time** using a stopwatch or a website like toggl.com. This helps you stay organized, especially if you're self-employed and you bill clients by the hour.

BOOST YOUR MOOD AND ENERGY LEVELS

[] **Get "dressed for work"** even though you're at home. Choose an outfit that helps you feel comfortable, confident, attractive, and reasonably "put together." This means different things for different people. For you it could mean yoga pants, a soft sweater, and gold hoop earrings. Or jeans and a nice shirt. Whatever helps you feel "elevated," go with that.

[] **Do your usual hygiene/self-care routine** even though you're at home. Wash your face. Trim your beard. Do your lip balm or mascara or whatever helps you feel good.

[] **Choose a music playlist** that helps you get into a focused state. Experiment to figure out what works best for you—Classical music? Chill electronic beats? Do you like music with lyrics? Or do lyrics distract you? PS. [I share all my favorite music playlists here.](#)

CHOOSE YOUR TOP PRIORITIES

[] Before you "officially" start working, **make a checklist of your top work priorities for the day.** You can title this checklist: *"What I'm Focusing On Today,"* or, *"My Top 5 Tasks for Today,"* or, *"My Work Checklist for Today,"* or, *"Things Due Today,"* or whatever wording feels right.

Please be realistic about how much you can accomplish in 6 hours, 8 hours, or however many hours you're working today. Most people tend to

wildly over-estimate what they can finish in a single day, and then wind up feeling discouraged (“*Ugh, I didn’t get everything done!*”).

Be gentle and reasonable with yourself. Remember that you’re a human being, not a robot who can work relentlessly at a supersonic pace.

REMOVE DISTRACTIONS

[] **Keep your phone off**, on silent, or “airplane mode,” unless you’re expecting an important call.

[] **Use a tool like BlockSite.co** to block tempting, distracting websites like Facebook, Amazon, BuzzFeed, etc.

[] Email might be an important part of your job, but it’s probably not your *entire* job. (Unless you’re a customer service agent and your primary responsibility is to reply to emails all day long.) **Try to log out of email** for chunks of time so you’re not continually distracted by incoming messages.

[] **Download materials you need** (Word docs, PDFs, project instructions, etc.), then disconnect from Wi-Fi and work offline for a period of time. You might get a lot more done if you’re not distracted by the Internet.

The fewer distractions you have, the better you’ll feel, and the faster you’ll get into a deep, focused “flow state” and do your best work.

DO THINGS THAT HELP YOU FEEL STRONG, POWERFUL, GRATEFUL, AND CONNECTED TO OTHERS

[] **Connect with people you love.** At least once a day, take a coffee break and reach out to someone. Check in and see how they’re doing.

Choose high-quality connection (a meaningful conversation, honesty, vulnerability, generosity, sharing hope and encouragement) rather than junk-food connection (like scrolling mindlessly through social media feeds of people you don't even know).

[] **Ask for help.** If you're feeling really stressed and struggling to focus on your work, ask for help. You don't have to do this alone. Your friends and family might be able to pitch in and help out with laundry, cooking, cleaning, etc. to free up more space in your brain so you can work and earn money.

[] Or perhaps you can **hire some help.** TaskRabbit.com, Fiverr.com, and Upwork.com are good places to hire people for small (or big) projects, everything from running errands to household repairs to professional services like proofreading, editing, design, and more.

[] **If you had 24 hours to live, what would you do?** How would you spend your time? Would you call your mom to say, "I love you"? Would you watch the sunset? Would you hold your kids and kiss the tops of their heads? **Make a list of what you would do on your final day.** Whatever you wrote down, try to incorporate some (or all) of those things into your regular everyday life. Even if your work schedule is super busy, try to make time for small moments that matter. This makes such a difference for your emotional health and quality of life.

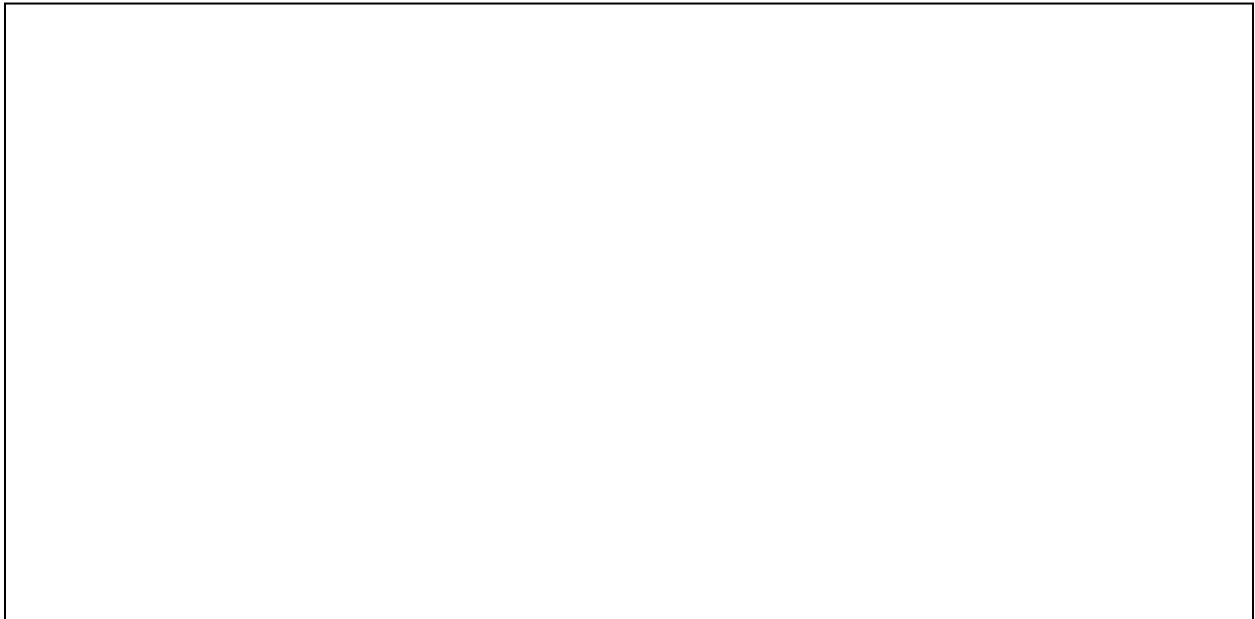
[] Lastly, **do something to signal a transition from work-time to not-work-time.** You could close your laptop and put it away in a drawer, play a specific song that signals "work is over!", take a shower, do a workout, change into your night time clothes, or some other ritual that helps you feel "done" for today. This helps you clear your mind, reset, and feel

present so you can enjoy your home without feeling like you're still "at work."

OTHER IDEAS

What are some other ways that you could set yourself up for a calm, focused, and successful workday?

Jot down anything you'd like to try.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write down their ideas for a calm, focused, and successful workday.

THANKS FOR DOWNLOADING THIS CHECKLIST!

This is a free checklist. Enjoy. Share it with friends, family, and students.

If you'd like to publish this worksheet in a book, magazine, on a website, or any other platform, or if you'd like to use this worksheet in a commercial/for-profit context (with clients, customers, etc.), please email hello@alexandrafrenzen.com to request permission first. Thank you.

ABOUT ALEXANDRA

[Alexandra Franzen](#) is a writer and entrepreneur based in Hawaii.

Her writing has been published in places like *Time*, *Forbes*, *Newsweek*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Lifehacker*. She's been mentioned in places like *The New York Times Small Business Blog*, *The Atlantic*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *Inc*.

She's the author of several books, including [The Checklist Book](#), [You're Going to Survive](#), and [So This Is the End: A Love Story](#).

She teaches classes on writing, communication, creative marketing, productivity, setting intentions and goals, and simplifying life and work. She has led classes in 18 cities around the world—and online, too.

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