



## USEFUL PRACTICES FROM OUR FRIENDS IN UVA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

1. Do your best to set up an ergonomic work environment at the start of your work-from-home experience (desk, good chair, keyboard tray, etc.) While it seems like a lovely side-benefit that you can work from your couch, in reality doing this for normal work hours will fairly quickly tear down your body (especially the neck, back, arms, and wrists). It is better to head this off at the pass before you have inflammation in your wrists or a bad crick in your neck, because those often don't go away as quickly as you would hope.
2. If you are in a role that requires a lot of meetings, you may want to invest the time and energy to run an actual ethernet cable from your home router/modem to where you will be working. It is stressful when you are in a meeting and getting "poor network performance" messages while the audio and video lags and jitters. Wireless works fine 98% of the time, but a wired connection will be more stable and provide a better experience for you.
3. A good headphone set is highly recommended for attending meetings and having some control over the sound quality. Laptop microphones/speakers vary hugely in quality and range and often provide a sub-optimal experience. While a bad audio experience once in a while is not the end of the world, when you are experiencing this daily it can quickly become an unanticipated source of stress.
4. Video makes a huge difference in feeling connected. So much information is conveyed via facial expressions and body language that trying to do all your work communications via the phone (or via other audio-only options) will often make you feel disconnected and unsatisfied. Zoom is fantastic at handling video during calls and is quite easy to use. Now that our teams are working from home, we are all trying to use video more and it really helps in bridging the feeling of isolation from being at home instead of in the office.
5. If you are trying to work in a noisy environment (whether it's from pets, spouses, kids, etc.), playing white noise through a pair of headphones can be a lifesaver. Many cannot concentrate while music, talking, or the TV is going on in the background. White noise can block a lot of the background noise and help you concentrate more effectively. One example that is the Alpha track on this CD: <https://www.amazon.com/Waterfall-Entrainment-White-Noise-Meditation/dp/B001J549M0>, although there are hundreds of other options.
6. Keep in mind that while Americans WANT to believe that multi-tasking is a sign of high productivity, research in fact shows that none of us are all that good at it. It is mentally draining and often it turns into a "doing many things at once, but none of them well" situation. While it is often impossible to avoid multi-tasking completely, try to minimize this wherever possible. Working from home opens up a plethora of opportunities to get sucked into multi-tasking (including doing other work while participating in meetings, trying to cook, clean, or provide childcare while also attempting to work, and even attempting to work while running errands around town). Again, try to resist this temptation as much as possible! It's fine to take a 5 minute break to put something in the crock pot, but if you are participating in a meeting while you are downstairs trying to do this, you will end up frazzled, with possibly ruined food, and not know half of what was said in the meeting.