



Tips for working from home

BY PETER LINFORD

Shielding. Quarantine. Lockdown. Curfew. Isolation. Whatever you call it, the last word is the difficult one. We are social creatures. On the whole, we don't like being alone and even when we do, sooner or later we need other people to be around us. A number of us are working from home. This is a challenging time for us as individuals, quite apart from the work we may have to do.

Also, we can either end up doing no work at all or working crazy hours.

A few things can help in this respect:

- Keep to your regular hours. Don't start early and don't work late.
- Dressing for work can help – it gets you into a work mindset.
- Try to keep a separate space in the house for working at a desk or table.

- Have regular breaks.
- Stop and take a full hour for lunch (and don't eat lunch at your desk).
- Speak to your colleagues regularly.

This last point is a really important one.

Much as we may love our families we also need to continue to work and exist as a team and have some variety in who is around us and who we are talking to. There doesn't need to be a reason to call beyond simply saying hello and asking how some is. Pick up the phone or make a video call two or three times a day.

Also do login to the weekly CPJF update which is a wider chance to catch up with everyone.

And don't forget this is only temporary. There will be an end to it.



Smiling is infectious

By Spike Milligan

Smiling is infectious,
you catch it like the flu.

When someone smiled at
me today,
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner
and someone saw my grin.

When he smiled I realised
I'd passed it on to him.

I thought about that smile,
then I realised its worth.

A single smile, just like mine
could travel round the earth.

So, if you feel a smile begin,
don't leave it undetected.

Let's start an epidemic quick,
and get the world infected!

“Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.” Joseph Addison

Reading for as little as six minutes a day can reduce stress levels by up to 68% - so even more of an excuse to carve out a little 'me time' at the end of the day and dive into a new book. I've just finished 'Where the Crawdads Sing' by Delia Owens for my latest book club read. Despite having a slightly bizarre title, it's beautifully written and a joy to read.

You too can add a social dimension by joining an online book group, start one up with a group of friends on House Party or more simply by agreeing to read the same book as a friend before discussing its merits over the phone.

If you're looking for inspiration I don't think you can go far wrong with a [Richard and Judy bookclub recommendation](#).

Waterstones also have a '[Book of the month](#)' section on their website, with a brief write up.

Please share any good books you've read recently with us and we can pass them on to others to enjoy!





Getting comfort from Mother Nature

Judging by the weather, it would appear that spring has finally sprung! The trees are in full blossom and the birds have come out in force to cheer us with their song. There has never been a better time to take a moment to appreciate the nature around us and to take some comfort from it, as we engage in our one daily outdoor exercise activity each day.

This weekend, look up and around you, taking note mentally or in a journal of the different species of birds you see. The [RSPB online bird identifier](#) is a great resource to learn about the 408 species of birds that can be found in the UK.

To encourage more birds to your garden, patio or windowsill try feeding them – contrary to myth, birds still benefit from being fed in spring and summer, especially if you stick to high protein diets and avoiding peanuts which can harm their young. They will thank you by paying more frequent visits, allowing you to enjoy their company and song.

Lynne Penney shared a great idea for a homemade bird feeder, using an old milk bottle and some felt tips – not only was this a great crafting activity in our house, filling a few hours in one day(!), but its incredibly effective! Please so send pictures of your creations and any interesting birds you manage to spot. There may even be a prize in it for the best photo!



Self care practices

by Emma Symons

Following on from last week's newsletter around self care, I thought I would offer my interpretation and practices that I use for my own self care, as well as some other tips and ideas that may help you find something that works for you.

I have spent over ten years studying personal development, wellbeing and holistic health and if I've learnt anything, it's that health isn't just about what's on your dinner plate or how often you go to the gym. Holistic wellness focuses on your emotional, mental and social health, along with physical health.

If you're one of those people that always puts your own needs at the end of the priority list then not only are you neglecting yourself but also everyone that relies on you. You can't pour from an empty cup so it's important that you fill your own cup before you fill other people's.

Personally, I think self care is something that is best done away from the workplace and something that needs time putting aside to do. For me, self care is about taking time to recharge the batteries and reboot the system. Although taking five minutes in your day to stop and breathe or do some relaxation exercises is great, nothing beats taking real time out for yourself.

My own self care ritual which I do every Sunday involves a long bath with my homemade relaxation bath salts, then a short meditation and some reiki to rebalance my energy. I also like to journal, as this helps to clear out anything that's been on my mind and gives me some clarity on any decisions I may need to make.

There are many things you can do, such as creative writing – really immersing yourself in it, or other creative activities such as knitting, sewing or baking, or taking a walk in nature and photograph things that inspire you. Mindfulness colouring books are great and easy to lose yourself in, and another of my favourite self care rituals is to light some scented candles and watch a favourite movie with a large gin and tonic!

Whatever you choose to do, the most important thing is not to feel guilty about doing it and to make it a regular part of your life.



Easter wishes

As we look to the extended Easter weekend and keep our fingers crossed for more of the lovely warm weather, we think of the many of you will be on call and working and hope that you may all be able to carve out some family time and much needed rest and recuperation...maybe even a chocolate egg or two...!