

Work from Home Checklist

By Lauren Meir

Think Before You Work

- Can you handle working from home? This question is tougher than it sounds** Try a few "practice days" before you make your final decision.
- Will you be working from home occasionally, part-time, or full-time? This will affect both your ultimate decision and possibly your approach to the task, as well as any budgeting concerns.**
- Make a list of the pros and cons** Will you be saving money, or spending more on office supplies? If you're a freelancer, you'll have to open an IRA, and also consider health insurance. These factors should all be taken in to consideration.

Home Office Essentials

- A quiet room or personal area with enough space for all your supplies-** This should be ;separate ;or partitioned off from the rest of your home, a place where you can work undisturbed.
- Laptop or desktop computer** Both are good, but if you have to pick, a laptop may be your best bet, since it's portable.
- A desk and comfortable adjustable desk chair.**
- Pens, pencils, and any other necessary writing tools**
- Legal pads or notebooks; paper**
- Memo pads/sticky notes**
- Printer and paper**
- Dry-erase board with markers**
- Bulletin board with pins**
- Filing cabinet with file folders** If you run a business out of home, this ;may be necessary.
- Specialty tools of your trade** This could be a draft board with a place to stash blueprints, or a dressmaker's dummy. Whatever it is you need for your job, you better make sure you have it!

Working Effectively from Home

- Ensure your work space is conducive to working** This sounds like a no-brainer, but if you don't set up an office environment that allows you to comfortably work and stay focused, you won't be productive.
- Schedule your day** In order stay motivated and productive, you need a structured routine so you can effectively manage your ;tasks, especially if you have deadlines to meet.
- Track your Time** Monitor how much time is spent not working. What are you doing, and how much does it detract from your work schedule?

- Avoid checking personal email or visiting social networking sites during work hours** This can distract you for hours, and will inevitably cost you your day...and possibly your job.
- Stay Connected** If you work from home full-time, it's easy to lose contact with family and friends. Set aside time during the day (during a break, for example) to call or email close contacts...stay in the loop.
- Take breaks** Even working from home entitles you to a respite from your desk. Just be sure it's a reasonable break, and you use it wisely.
- Change your scenery** If you're going stir crazy, it's ok to step out for a walk, or bring your work with you - take your laptop to a coffee shop or favorite place and work from there for an hour or two.