

Culture

Remote working may be the best thing ever?



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Great view from the office!

Here at HealthMetrics, we have transitioned over the last 2 years to a remote-first company. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic changed the way we work forever. It

forced us to evaluate the feasibility of working remotely wherever possible to allow us to continue as an effective, leading-edge, software development company. Today, almost 95% of the HealthMetrics team work from home. This is mostly a great thing. But there are some challenges. Read on.



We have all read about the benefits of remote working for the employee and here at HealthMetrics many of us have already experienced the following:

- **Flexibility**
- **Cost saving**
- **Time-saving**
- **Work anywhere**
- **Peace and quiet**
- **Health**

- **Better work/life balance**

- **Comforts of home**

But let's take a closer look at these and give a more unbalanced view.

Flexibility

We now have the freedom to plan our days around our work and home life. We can attend medical appointments, watch the kids at sports, or even take our elderly parents shopping. As long as we meet our daily work tasks and meet targets on time, our bosses are happy. This works for some but it doesn't always suit everyone. Now you have to be your own manager which requires a good amount of self-discipline. This is not easy for everyone.

Cost saving

Yay! No more commuting to work each day. No more travel costs, save petrol, save the planet. Savings on public transport, parking, car or bike running costs. No more traffic jams. No more office clothes to buy. Some may even save on childcare costs. But it increases your home electricity bill and you need a better, faster, more reliable link to the outside world so your internet costs go up. And my coffee bill has gone up – Nespresso pods aren't cheap!

If you aren't able to work from home then your only choice may be to use a co-working space or café but this will cost you money.

Time-saving

Sure, we save time commuting but that was actually a fun part of the day – especially if you ride a bike or drive a Porsche. So you can deduct that fun factor from your day. And it's a good way to ease into your workday and unwind at the end of it. Now it's a shock to open the door to the spare room, one more step and you're at work! The upside is that when your work day is done it's only a few steps out of the 'office' and you're home.

Work anywhere



This is a good one, *work from anywhere*. Yeah – for most of us that means finding a space in the house where you can set up your laptop and get some work done. Some of us don't have that much spare room at home, so we end up squatting on the end of the bed. Or in the bathroom? Me? I'm planning on moving to Thailand and working from a beach chair by the ocean, drinking chilled coconut juice all day. That surely is a happy way to work. Or maybe you want to go travelling and see more of the world? If that's the case then there's nothing stopping you – you can travel over the weekend and be ready to go on Monday in another town or even another country.





Peace and quiet

Offices can be noisy places to work – phones ringing, people chatting and the general buzz of office life. All these distractions can drive you nuts if you really want to get some proper work done. And office politics – let's not go there! So it's great to work from home... unless you have young kids around. Have you ever tried to remove a soft, squishy banana from your brand new laptop keyboard & screen? It's ugly – ask me how I know. And that washing machine screeching and vibrating next door is just so relaxing. And the neighbourhood dogs barking – that's when I finally relented and bought my JBL Bluetooth headphones. Now it's quiet.



Health

OK – during Covid and whatever the next pandemic brings us, it's definitely healthier to stay home and avoid contact with other people. Before Covid, we always caught whatever virus was 'going round the office', but then you were allowed to take sick leave. Which wasn't always such a bad thing. Now we just soldier on with whatever ailments we have because we can. I need to be very ill before I'll surrender and simply stay in bed.

They say that mental health can improve with remote working as there is less stress and working in your own environment can be relaxing. Maybe for some. For others, it can be extremely stressful not having social interaction with peers and workmates. Not having that daily escape from home can be a real disadvantage and mentally damaging.



Better work/life balance

Being able to work remotely can offer a better work/life balance for some. It can make you feel in control of your life and give you more time to plan both work and home tasks. You can take a break when you need one – but you could do that in the office too. You get more family time – but did you want that?

Some people work better in the mornings than in the afternoons. And some come alive with ideas in the evenings. As long as the time you're working doesn't affect your colleagues and you meet deadlines then you can work when you wish. But beware of burnout from working too many hours. Learn to switch off and stop checking your messages.

messages.

Comforts of home

One of the advantages of remote working means you can set up your office or workspace as you want it. As long as you have the space and the money, you can have the ultimate office. But that isn't always an option for some. Hopefully, there's a space that you can call your own and then create a comfortable area to work in.





I do love it when my wife brings me a cup of coffee and some homemade banana bread though.

So, to sum up working remotely... I love it!

When I weigh up the pros and cons, the pros win hands down. It may take some time for everyone to create a comfortable workspace of their own but it will be worth it in the end. HealthMetrics is dedicated to being a remote-first company and is doing as much as possible to enable employees to make the most of the 'new normal'. They offer all employees a 'Remote Working Subsidy' to help them to create a healthy home office. This is in the form of an annual allowance and can be used to buy additional office equipment (Company Lenovo laptops are already provided), pay for internet access or even co-working space.

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