

# 10 reasons why working from home is NOT working for you.

AND HOW TO GET YOUR WORKLIFE  
BACK IN BALANCE.

**WorkLife**  
THINK GLOBAL. WORK LOCAL.

# 1.

## FOCUS ON THE TASK AT HAND.

You have 28 tabs open, a to-do list with 7 urgent and important tasks you never get to, are making yourself 11 cups of tea each day and your family think you are always available to help. You thought that working from home would reduce the distractions and increase your productivity, but somehow the opposite has happened.

Sound familiar?

# Before a task, calm your brain.

Sharpen your focus by trialling three of our favourite productivity hacks - morning meditation, bullet journalling and the pomodoro technique.

**Meditation** 10 minutes of meditation with a free app like **Calm** is the best way to train your mind to ignore the constant interruptions, notifications and distractions that get in the way of nailing those urgent tasks. By starting your day with The Daily Calm, you are literally strengthening the muscle that is your ability to focus. Each distraction resisted adds back the 15-20 minutes it takes our brains to refocus on the task at hand after an interruption.

**Journaling** We lead busy lives, but being busy doesn't necessarily mean we're being productive. Try the bullet-journaling method for managing your diary with its Future, Daily and Monthly logs to keep you on task. **The Self Co** have nailed it with their target market- enabling thousands of entrepreneurs to reach their goals with their simple, and perfectly designed The Self Journal. Essentially, bullets are short-form sentences paired with symbols that visually categorize your entries into: Tasks, Events, or Notes. Tasks, Events, and Notes will help you quickly capture your thoughts as they bubble up throughout the day without needing

to log them in any particular order. The important thing is to get them out of your head, and onto the page and get back to the priority task at hand. Once mastered, this technique of emptying your brain, and the discipline of sorting tasks according to category and priority will quieten even the chattiest monkey mind.

**Timekeeping** For many of us, time is an enemy. We race against the clock to finish tasks and meet deadlines. The **Pomodoro Technique** is a deceptively simple, but powerful way to work with time, instead of struggling against it. The simple trick of the system is to make a small pledge to yourself: I will spend 25 minutes on this task and I will not interrupt myself. It can be done! After all, it's just 25 minutes, and when you start knocking 10 Pomodoro's over a day it's amazing what happens to the to-do list. The second important element to this technique is properly rewarding yourself at the conclusion of each session with a break. Not a scroll through your email or a quick read of the news, but a genuine stand up, walk and breathe kind of reset. Then dive back into the next 25 minutes of uber focused productivity.

**60% of coworkers  
report being more  
relaxed at home  
since they began  
coworking.**



# 2.

## YOUR MENTAL HEALTH IS CALLING, IT WANTS IT'S LIFE BACK.

You thought office life was draining. That was until you found yourself living groundhog day. Bed, fridge, dining table, fridge, dining table, washing line, fridge, dining table, bed. Is anyone really surprised that being by yourself in an isolated environment for long periods of time isn't healthy?

That's what you are when you work from home. Alone. You've done the housework, you are taking calls in your pyjamas or yesterdays gym gear, for your 'lunch break', you allow yourself to scroll through facebook for a little longer than you should over your morning tea break and then find yourself answering emails in bed at night to catch up. Your energy has never been lower and work feels like a never ending grind.

Sound familiar?

**“Working in isolation limits our potential to focus and grow intellectually.” \***

The recipe for good mental health when you work at home includes a few core non-negotiable ingredients. Guaranteed every time you find yourself flat and unmotivated it will be because you have let one of these slip.

**Company** Loneliness is one of the biggest risk factors for mental health, and working alone from home is strongly correlated with increasing loneliness and isolation.

**Routine** Office life has a rhythm to it. Synchronised starts to the day, lunch hours and everyone around you packing up and heading home rubs off by osmosis and helps structure your day. Left to your own devices at home it's easy to develop a feeling of chaos that is terrible for humans that crave the security of routine.

**Nutrition** It doesn't need to be a vegan diet built on activated nuts. But three regular meals a day, healthy snacks, not too many coffees and a beer fridge that doesn't open before work finishes is a good start.

**Sleep** Having a regular start and finish time to your working day will make an enormous difference to your ability to wind down and sleep properly at night.

\*lookup.org.au

“

**It can be lonely running  
your own business, but  
here there's a natural  
pull for entrepreneurial,  
likeminded people to  
come together.**

”





# 3.

## CLOCK ON, CLOCK OFF, CLOCK ON, CLOCK ON AND CLOCK ON AGAIN.

Work starts the moment you wake up, roll over and start scrolling through your phone. It finishes when the pile of washing up is distracting you more than the pile of invoices you still need to chase up. You started working from home so you could manage your WorkLife balance. But balance seems to be the first thing that has gone out the window. Instead of looking forward to seeing people, you become grumpy when you are interrupted by the neighbour or well meaning family member dropping by for a chat. Don't they know you're working! Home life has crept into your WorkLife.

Sound familiar?

# Add some structure to your day

## Sort out your WorkLife balance by setting some structure to your day.

There are a number of great methods for time management, but the best and simplest one we have found is the **default diary**.

To start, sit down and roughly log your activity over a few weeks.

Review what you have been spending your time doing, and identify your key activities – the most important activities – set them into your diary in a regular slot and then sort the rest around those priorities.

Take a stab at theming some of your days; sales, finances, marketing, projects etc. It helps enormously to contain face-to-face meetings to certain days to allow as much

time as possible for focused work.

Then make sure you always block out a solid 2 hours on a regular basis to focus on the future of your business, where you are heading.

Lastly, don't forget to include essentials like family time and exercise, plus make an effort to lock in some regular time for continuing education. We have included a link to download a free daily default diary at the end of this document.

A default diary is a simple and effective way to take control of your working environment. It's all too easy to be chasing your tail then get to the end and think: what did I really achieve this week?

**64% of coworkers  
said they were  
better able to  
complete tasks on  
time**



# 4.

## WHERE ARE YOU BRAINTRUST? THIS IS ME CALLING.

Remember when you would ask the lady in accounts for help with those excel formulas and the food-mad receptionist for ideas for date night this week? When deciding on mobile providers, your next holiday or the best project management software that integrates with XERO was just a matter of asking around? When you used to work in an office you could mumble something about a problem you were having and someone would mention an article they had read, you'd deep dive into that for a minute and then your brain would start firing again...

**Sound familiar?**

# Virtual braintrust?

**So now you're working at home, you need to be able to reconstitute a virtual braintrust.**

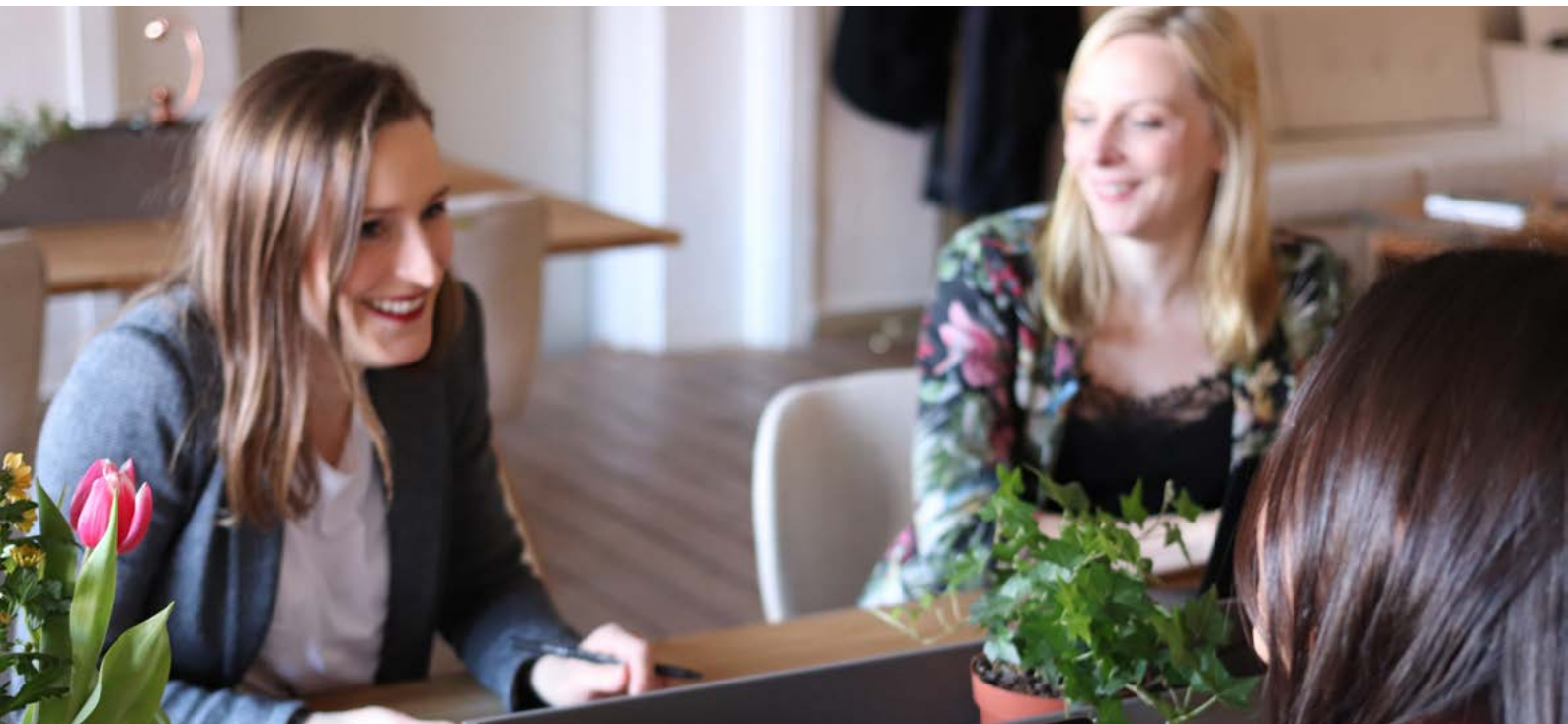
Here's how. Reconnect with the power of the network by joining some of the Facebook or Slack groups out there for small business people.

Some of the friendliest around include [Like Minded Bitches Drinking Wine](#), [Business Chicks](#), [Flying Solo](#) or locally, your Chamber of Commerce. They are great virtual places to seek recommendations, learn from others experiences, share big wins or drown your sorrows when you need some empathy and support.





**90% said they felt  
more confident  
when working from  
a coworking space**



# 5.

## YOU CUT YOUR COSTS, BUT ALSO STUNTED YOUR GROWTH. OOPS!

Working from home is cheap, yippee, you can now claim 18.5% of your electricity bill as a home-office expense! You cut out all of that wasted time commuting, can now make your lunches every day and you've got time to stay on top of all of those household chores so you can cancel the cleaner. But instead of slowing down your costs, it seems that you slowed down your business. The phone doesn't ring as much as it used to, you are having less of those opportunistic chats with potential clients and collaborators. Work is ok, it's just not growing...

Sound familiar?

# Stunted growth

To ensure that your business doesn't dwindle with your operating costs you will need to make sure your business development stays active and you stay engaged with your network.

This is something that can be very hard when you are no longer randomly bumping into opportunities in the course of your day and have gotten used to working in your pyjamas.

How will you translate your networking to the virtual world? And how will you make sure you keep up the momentum week on week?

**Social Media** Pour all of your social media energies into your businesses social media channels. Do an audit of your followers, see who is really engaging with your content and reach out and connect with customers or businesses to see if they might be interested in cross-promotions or referrals.

**Marketing** Dive deep into content based marketing and write blog posts or record a podcast. Spend some time each week on

LinkedIn watering your network - writing and seeking recommendations, responding to other people's milestones, sharing an interesting article and reaching out to useful people for a quick phone call to check in on what they are up to and how you might be of help.

**Networking** If you find things have quietened down, whatever you do don't let it grind you down. Take a #salesfirst approach. Make a few cold calls your very first task of the day. Don't be shy to reach out to colleagues and tell them you are seeking to build your networks in a particular niche, and would they be willing to introduce you to 3 people they know who might be interested in your services down the track.

And if they do, say thanks promptly and offer to return the favour. After all, it costs nothing to be courteous!

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**Just not having to think about any of the logistics of having an office is fantastic.**

”



# 6.

## WHO NEEDS COLLEAGUES FOR COMPANY ANYWAY?

You thought office politics was a waste of time and energy. That the guy that sits across from you talked too loudly and was always on the phone. That it would be heaven to be able to have 8 solid hours to get your work done with no distractions. Finally you were going to get on top of your work and get your life back! But it turns out that having no one to share your frustrations with Telstra, that awesome new series you found on Netflix last night, your minor win with that needy client or the fact that you are battling a bit of a hangover today feels a little lonely. You find yourself checking Facebook a few too many times a day, pacing the kitchen and talking to yourself occasionally. Work isn't as fun as it used to be. It's now just work...

Sound familiar?

# Work isn't as fun as it used to be.

It's time to efficiently add social engagement back into your day.

**Meetings** It might be as simple as ensuring you have one day a week that you bunch all of your meetings into and make the effort to make them face to face. Structure your day to ensure you regularly connect with people in the flesh. Start by ensuring you do your emails over a coffee in a cafe where they know your name.

**Education** Or recognise that even if you are self-employed it's vital to keep on investing in your skills and education. So carve at least 2-3 hours a week out of your schedule for a course, a workshop or a session with a business coach. Spending

that time with others will make you feel more motivated and engaged. Instead of wasted time at the water cooler chatting about the latest Netflix series, you are adding to your knowledge bank.

**Volunteering** Or better still, make that time spent with people really count - get involved with your local Chamber of Commerce, volunteer to teach ethics at your local primary school or mentor a student just entering your profession. One of the best ways to energise and connect yourself is to do something altruistic for someone else.

**68% of people  
working from  
coworking spaces  
said they were  
able to *focus more*  
than working from  
home.**





# 7.

## THE HOME OFFICE IS VERY HOMELY.

A home office is a lovely thing. Full of **your** photos, **your** favourite comfy chair, some house plants you are going to nurture, **your** music played at **your** volume, a cupboard stocked with all of **your** preferred snacks and no one else's forgotten lunches rotting in the back of your fridge. Except it turns out before you get work started each day you need to clear the mail, move all of those piles of clothes, ignore the cleaning and stop pigging out on those snacks. Oh, and your green thumb is looking black and your habit of wearing nothing but active wear is feeling ironic...

Sound familiar?

# Working from home isn't working.

**If you are going to work from home, you need to get your head into work-mode.**

Flexibility is what got you here, but routine is going to enable you to make this work.

Get your exercise gear out the night before, plan when you will exercise - and the same goes for a structured lunch break away from your computer.

Using some of the techniques we used in section 1, you can set yourself up for success. Flitting between the washing machine and the quote you said you would have back to the client today means that task is going to take you much longer to tackle and complete.

You will need to ignore the house work, set some boundaries around the times you will do this. Will it be in your lunch break? Will you clock off at 2pm and get that stuff done and return to your desk at 3pm? Ah, but the kids home by then and your attention is required to be focused on them! Looks like you need to come back to the desk at 5? 6? 9pm...

What do you need to do to make this work? What does your daily default diary look like?

“

**WorkLife saves me  
from being pulled into  
domestic distractions.**

”



# 8.

## THE TRANSITIONS BETWEEN WORK AND LIFE ARE CAUSING WHIPLASH

You used to use your commute to work to plan your day and after work you would go to the gym, catch up with a friend or stop off and do the shopping for dinner. It's only now that you realise that all of those in-between times actually served to move work from the front of your mind to the back of your mind where it would be ready to be picked up again the next day. Now that you're working from home that incredibly frustrating conference call at 5pm has a tendency to ruin your mood for the evening ahead. You're still stewing about that lost account while cooking dinner. The kids need help with that school project, but you know that you just need 15 more undisturbed minutes to finish that proposal before you can switch off for the night. But you don't switch off, you've lost your transition space between work and home.

Sound familiar?

# You've lost the off button.

**To ensure that you are able to seamlessly transition between work and life you are going to have to deliberately insert some transition moments to ensure good WorkLife hygiene.**

Time for your brain to switch off from work and switch onto your life. Make leaving home, picking up groceries and the kids from the school bus the end of your day. Resist the temptation to clock back on to just send that one email when you get home. Make a small conscious ceremony about shutting down your computer, putting your phone onto

charge or tidying away your desk for the day. Spend 5 minutes reviewing your to-do list from the day, crossing off the items you accomplished and naming the 3 priority tasks for the next day. Ensure that you schedule exercise, hobbies or walking the dog at the beginning or end of the day to get the maximum benefit from their ability to reset you.

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**The entrepreneurial spirit is infectious and so collaborative.**

”



# 9.

## I'M SO BUSY WORKING ON MY WEALTH, I FORGOT ABOUT MY HEALTH.

The Fitbit doesn't lie. Whilst the commute is a pain in the arse, now the majority of your steps are between the dining table and the fridge. It turns out that incidental movement, stepping out for lunch, running to catch the train, zipping between meetings and racing between floors to brainstorm with the team downstairs all adds up. The early morning exercise routine isn't happening anymore and the sloth has moved in...

**Sound familiar?**

# Moving much?

**Remember how we talked about routine? You need to make your health a priority and the easiest way to do that is to make it a habit.**

Put movement into your **daily default diary** and research shows that if you stick to it for anywhere from 60–90 days and you'll have yourself a new way of life. There's no other way other than just doing it.

But reflect for a moment on the three keys to forming a successful new habit- **timing**, **tracking** and **rewards**. We recommend setting SMART goals then use a system to track your progress.

SMART goals are Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Rewardable and Trackable.

**Timing** Is your diarised lunch break your exercise time? Is it 3pm when you leave to pick up the kids? Can you make this a 30 minute walk instead of a 5 min drive? Or is it getting up at 5am to drive to the gym?

**Tracking** Whatever you decide - put it in your diary, set a reminder and stick to

it. Make sure to document your intention and you track your performance to maximise your chances of success. There are some great app's to assist with building sustainable new habits- we love **Streaks** for it's clean, sexy design and the fact it integrates brilliantly with the Health app on IOS devices. Plus for anyone that responds well to gamified elements and wants to make the challenge social and fun try Habitica.

**Rewards** Lastly, make sure that when you set goal and tick it off the list, be sure to take the moment to reward yourself. Whether it's an early mark, a spot of internet shopping, a lunch with a mate or a change of gears to a more enjoyable tasks, it's crucial when setting up good habits to not skip over the part where you congratulate yourself for a job well done.



**Only 30% of users of  
coworking spaces prefer  
to work during normal  
business hours**



# 10.

## YOUR SERVICE MAY BE INTERRUPTED...

Back in your office days you arrived, turned on your computer and started work. Occasionally the internet was slow and you'd look up, ask if everyone else had a problem and then picked up the phone to let the office manager know. He might have to switch you onto the backup system- what a pain that was, you had to restart your machine and empathise with the 6 hours he spent on the phone trying to get to the bottom of the issue!

These days you watch the weather report to see how your internet's going to behave tomorrow, have Telstra on speed dial and a claim or two running with the ombudsman. You know exactly how to restart your modem - it's already been 4 times this month and your data use on your mobile plan is through the roof because you have to keep on hotspotting to upload those images.

It's too risky to try and join that crucial meeting by video conference - it'll have to just be a phone call to be on the safe side of professional. The NBN is coming sometime next year, but word is, it's hardly worth it for the glacial speeds you'll get.

Sound familiar?

# How's the internet today?

## First things first.

If you are going to be your own IT help desk, make sure you are set up right.

Ensure you have the best connection possible for your area. Make sure to ask for a business level connection that will give you reliable downloads and is optimised for the upload speeds you will need for a clear video call. Don't just rely on the domestic version of the NBN - the kind that grinds to a halt when the neighbourhood kids get home from school and start playing Fortnite.

For the inevitable times where your service is interrupted- don't waste 6 hours on the phone to Telstra, have a contingency in place. The local library, cafe or coworking space that allows casual

days is your saviour. Or have a list of off-line tasks at hand for just these moments- a good strategic planning session with a pen and paper, writing a blog-post, phone calls to chase up all those outstanding invoices.

Maybe this is the time to get that stuff ticked off while you are on hold to your ISP.

# Small Changes.

# Big Impact.

We know from experience that making good work habits is hard. Each of the productivity hacks and tips in this e-book are designed to help you on your way to your best **WorkLife**.

Working from home can be the best way to build flexibility into your life, but it can also be lonely, unproductive and distracting. We guarantee that if you implement these changes (and stick with them throughout the year),

by the time 2020 rolls around, you'll have a completely transformed WorkLife and will be reaping the benefits of increased motivation, productivity and sales.

**And if you find yourself slipping you can always come and find us at WorkLife!**





## HERE'S WHY COWORKING IS THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION

1. It's easier to **focus** in an environment optimised for work surrounded by people hard at it.
2. People need people. Your **mental health** is better when you work in company.
3. A coworking space encourages you to add some **structure** to your day, and also has the added bonus that you can leave it all behind when you go home.
4. There's a bunch of wonderfully willing people who can help you solve a problem. Your **braintrust** is right there at the desk across from you.
5. **Growing** your business isn't so hard after all - your fellow coworkers can always introduce you to other people that might need your services.
6. Finding **new friends**, holiday-tips, restaurant recommendations or people to download about your latest find on Netflix happens naturally.
7. Coworking is designed to be the perfect mix of 'homey' and 'office' to keep you **focused** on the task at hand, rather than the washing or tonights dinner.
8. Creating some physical **separation** between WorkLife and home life allows you to change gears, switch off and rediscover relaxation.
9. Leaving the house to go to work gets you moving and creates more opportunities and incentives to incorporate **exercise** back into your day.
10. The **internet** works, and should it ever not, there are contingencies in place and it's someone elses job to sit on the phone to Telstra.

## ARE YOU LUCKY ENOUGH TO LIVE NEAR WORKLIFE?

WorkLife is a network of coworking spaces on the South Coast of NSW. We currently have coworking spaces in Kiama and Berry where our growing community of can-do small business owners, freelancers and commuters enjoy their best WorkLife each day. We would love for you to join us.



**The social aspect is a real bonus, plus there's such a range of professionals. There's always someone to bounce ideas off and have a chat to. The connections are gold.**

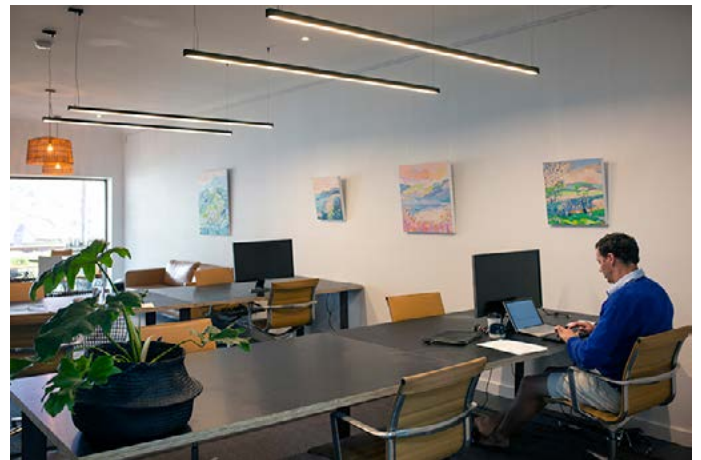




# Ready for a free trial at WorkLife?

Worklife opened its doors in Berry in 2017, Kiama in 2018. So far more than 60 small business people have joined our thriving community and are benefiting from all the advantages of coworking.

What are you waiting for?



“

**Be greeted by friendly faces, have a short friendly discussion, then everyone goes and gets on with their work. That human connection is super valuable.**

”



# Daily Default Diary

## REMEMBER THAT DAILY DEFAULT DIARY WE TALKED ABOUT?

We've provided you with a glimpse at our daily default diary below, and you can download it as a spreadsheet template [here](#) to get you started. Print it out, scribble on it, try it for a few days and tweak if necessary. Then stick to it!

Now, go and get stuck into it!

Themes		Sales	Events & Content	Meetings	Project	Business Ops	Learning	Pro Bono
		Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Prep	05:00 - 05:30							
	05:30 - 06:00							
	06:00 - 06:30							
	06:30 - 07:00	Tea & News	Tea & News	Tea & News	Tea & News	Tea & News		
	07:00 - 07:30	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise		
	07:30 - 08:00	Meditate/Plan	Meditate/Plan	Meditate/Plan	Meditate/Plan	Meditate/Plan		
	08:00 - 08:30	Kids	Kids	Kids	Kids	Kids		
Work	08:30 - 09:00	School Dropoff	School Dropoff	School Dropoff	School Dropoff	School Dropoff		
	09:00 - 09:30							
	09:30 - 10:00	Email	Personal Training	Email	Personal Training			
	10:00 - 10:30	Sales	Email	Meetings	Email			
	10:30 - 11:00		Events		Projects			
	11:00 - 11:30					Email		
	11:30 - 12:00					Business Ops		
	12:00 - 12:30							
	12:30 - 01:00							
	01:00 - 01:30	Lunch						
	01:30 - 02:00	Content	Events	Coaching/ WIP (alternate weeks)	Projects	Finance		
	02:00 - 02:30							
	02:30 - 03:00							
	03:00 - 03:30							
	03:30 - 04:00			Meetings				
	04:00 - 04:30	ProBono						
	04:30 - 05:00	Email	Plan tomorrow	Plan tomorrow	Plan tomorrow	Plan next week		
	05:00 - 05:30	Plan tomorrow	Coaching or WIP prep					
	05:30 - 06:00							
Self/ Social	06:00 - 06:30	Home	Home	Home	Home	Home		
	06:30 - 07:00							
	07:00 - 07:30	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner		
	07:30 - 08:00							
	08:00 - 08:30			Learning				
	08:30 - 09:00							



**It goes around in circles  
(at WorkLife). Everyone  
is bouncing ideas and  
sharing skills. It helps  
people stay fresh and get  
another perspective.**

