

# 9 Self-Love Exercises for Remote Workers to Boost Mood and Productivity



*Don't let the challenges of working from home bring you or your high-achieving results down. Embrace these self-love exercises for remote workers.*

Remote workers—if you're stressed to the max, so tired you can't function, or haven't been outdoors in days, something is wrong. It's called self-neglect.

While working from home has an abundance of perks, it also has challenges. For example, many telecommuters struggle with [setting boundaries](#) and working long hours without taking breaks or stepping away to clear their heads. This can take a toll on one's mental health. If this describes you, practicing self-love (and emotional well-being) and self-care can go a long way.

Use some, or all, of the nine self-love exercises for remote workers to stay strong with a healthy head in the game.

## 1. Reevaluate Your Nutrition

Food is the fuel our bodies run on. If we try to gas up our car with unsuitable ingredients, we can't be surprised when it doesn't run properly. Similarly, choosing to ingest food with little nutritional value, leaves our bodies struggling, too—and not just physically. Start with these 9 self-love exercises for remote workers to boost mood and productivity.

COVID-19 Telecommuting Resources

[COVID-19: Telecommuting Resources for Employees and Businesses - Remote Work and Jobsearch Advice for Jobseekers](#)

Get telecommuting help and resources for working from home during COVID-19. Free telecommuting plan for businesses and employee checklist.

**#TELECOMMU+E NOW**  
TIPS & RESOURCES

 Need Help?

[receptors for serotonin](#)—a neurotransmitter that regulates mood and memory—are produced in your digestive system, what you eat can have a significant effect on your mood and overall brain chemistry. Negative moods can even cause diminished cognitive performance and productivity, which could potentially damage your reputation and earning power at work.

Working from home affords you more control and flexibility with your diet. If you aren't eating well already, use the freedom of working remotely to turn the page on a healthier lifestyle. It's not worth letting poor nutrition damage your mental health or work history. Consider making one (or more) of these healthy choices:

- Alter your diet to include more feel-good foods, such as quinoa, salmon, yogurt, grapes, oranges
- Cut out processed foods
- Invest in organic produce
- Decrease your red meat intake
- Take a probiotic

## 2. Limit Your Time on Social Media

Even though your boss doesn't check in hourly or stand over your shoulder, avoid the temptation to check every Instagram notification or scroll through Facebook in your idle time. Self-love for remote workers also means avoiding unhealthy activities.

The consensus from the research community regarding social media and mental health is that less social media use correlates with better mental health. [One study](#) even found that subjects who used social media only occasionally were three times less likely to experience depression than frequent social media users.

Social media usage has also been linked to anxiety. When 100 social media users were tested for three months using a new monitor, touted as the [FitBit for mental health](#) with 1.2 million emotional indicators, results demonstrated that social media use significantly increased anxiety at rates higher than "what has been previously documented." Another investigation found participants who used [social media less than 30 minutes](#) each day were less likely to have anxiety and depression issues.

The Pew Research Center found that most employees who check social media during the workday do so as a kind of mental break. But as an individual who works from home, you have access to far healthier activities to grasp those few moments of mental downtime. Take a walk,

listen to a podcast, meditate, or call your significant other. Whatever you do, avoid the vapidness that resides in social media.

### 3. Remember that Plants Can Change Your Life

Plants are life-changers. Start small with an indoor office plant or embrace your green thumb and use your breaks as a remote worker to grow a backyard garden. If you're surrounded by city streets or share a housing complex, look into a balcony, urban, or rooftop garden. Professionals with plants in the office reported improved ability to focus and lower stress levels.

Planting items that remind you of your childhood or home country is a great way to create a sense of nostalgia and limit homesickness if you've recently moved away. If you're able to create space for an outdoor garden, go for it. Being outdoors has many health benefits and engages all your senses.

Enlisting the help of others in your gardening work can create a positive sense of social community for remote workers struggling with isolation. If this sounds like you, ask around and see if you have a community garden nearby. That may be the perfect way to apply these self-love for remote workers tips.

### 4. Smile—It Makes You Happier

At the earliest ages, we learn that a smile means you're happy. But when was the last time someone told you you're happy because you're smiling? Admittedly, it sounds ridiculous. Nonetheless, research that backs this truth isn't new. [According to studies](#), smiling leads to a better mood, lower stress, and even a stronger immune system.

Skeptical? Here's how it works. Smiling triggers a chemical response in your brain that releases serotonin and dopamine, hormones known to cause the "happiness" feeling.

Sure. Sitting at your desk at your workplace when you're forcing a smile will probably get you some stares and odd looks. However, as a remote worker, trying things like this may sound ridiculous. But you certainly don't have to worry about anyone watching. That's one of the perks of working from home.

One of the easiest ways to try this is also the method that was first used to test the concept:

Take a clean pencil or pen and hold it loosely in your mouth between your teeth. Wait a few minutes. See how you feel. Even in cases where research subjects didn't feel happy from this,

their levels of stress still decreased. This seems like a fair concession for a few minutes of looking a bit silly at your desk when there's no one around to drop in from the next cubicle and poke fun.

## 5. Have An Attitude of Gratitude

Gratitude is a perspective shift. Not only has practicing gratitude been shown to [improve happiness](#) and help with depression, but it also has lasting effects on the brain. This prolongs optimism and makes you less likely to experience burnout.

- Try keeping a gratitude journal. Identify three things each day you are grateful for and why. If you're struggling to enjoy your job or you're feeling overwhelmed, make sure at least one of the things you identify each day is work-related.
- Alternatively, use Post-it notes to write down each thing you are grateful for and display them in your workspace. Don't worry about being self-conscious. Since you work remotely, none of your co-workers will be able to see this (Of course, be sure to watch your computer angle during video calls). Short on space? Take your Post-it notes down after three to seven days and rotate them out with the new ones you add daily.
- If you aren't the best at keeping up with pen and paper, start a gratitude journal on your smartphone. [There are many apps](#) that support this on both Apple and Android products.

## 6. Serve Others

Whether you're making cookies for your next-door neighbor on your lunch hour or asking a co-worker how you can help, serving others is a great form of self-love for remote workers. It helps change your focus from yourself and your circumstances to the world around you. It also improves overall mood.

Are you a full-time employee with a company? Check into specific policies within your organization. Some employers allow a certain number of hours per month or year where an employee can volunteer their time in the community without losing pay for that time at work. Columbia University researchers even determined when we help someone else through stressful circumstances, we also improve our own [emotional](#) regulation skills. So, by caring for a frustrated co-worker or friend in crisis, not only are you boosting your mood, you are preparing yourself to better handle future stressful situations you face directly.

## 7. Soak in the Natural Light...and Avoid Harsh Artificial Bulbs



Extensive research addresses the pitfalls of harsh and artificial lighting in traditional workplaces. This “bad lighting,” i.e. fluorescent lighting, is associated with a range of physical and mental health problems, including headaches, stress, eyestrain, fatigue, anxiety, and seasonal affective disorder.

Of course, if your home—or even a [coworking space](#)—is your workplace, these apply to those, too. When offices swapped their artificial lighting for more [natural light](#), incidences of the health issues referenced above decreased by 50-65%. For many employees, it took less than 15 minutes of natural light exposure to set off the release of endorphins, the happy brain chemical.

As a remote worker, it's your responsibility to do this in your home. Start by creating or moving your workspace to somewhere that gets strong natural light. Find somewhere with windows that open and you'll also gain the benefit of fresh air and, possibly, the sounds of nature, depending on your location.

## 8. Enjoy The Great Outdoors

Alter your exercise routine. Trade the treadmill or stationary bike for the real outdoors. Studies suggest making this small change could have tremendous psychological benefits, including mood improvement. If you're not big on exercise, try taking your laptop elsewhere once or twice a week. For example, a local park or even a sweet spot in your own backyard should add some zest into your routine.

Those of us in more right-brain focused careers may also want to keep in mind some research shows spending time in nature can jolt your creativity by up to 50 percent.

## 9. Love Your Pet

If you find yourself starting to stress, take your furry friend outside for a five-to-10 minute game of catch. They'll enjoy your company, and you'll calm yourself down with a natural release of serotonin and dopamine.

If the weather isn't permitting, dive in for some snuggles with your favorite feline, trusted canine, or other special friend. Doing so will ease stress and anxiety, fulfill the natural human need for touch, and make your pet happy, too.

Self-care and self-love aren't some hippie-influenced philosophies. They are feelings and crafts that will leave you on the upper echelon of self-confidence and create a positive ego. As a remote worker, you may give up some human interactions. Don't give up your feeling that you're doing

Just fine. Self-love for remote workers may require some effort, but it's well worth the journey. Heck, you're probably still wearing pajamas. That speaks volumes.

*Are you a remote worker with some self-care tips of your own? Connect with Virtual Vocations on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#) to tell us what you think. We'd love to hear from you!*



Joining [Virtual Vocations](#) grants you access to our hand-picked telecommuting jobs database. Learn [how our service works](#), browse job leads by [location and career category](#), or search hundreds of hand-screened telecommuting jobs to find legitimate work-at-home job leads that match your skills and background. [Register for free](#) or [contact us](#) for more information on our service guarantee.

Check out our menu of [Career Services](#) provided by our team of certified professionals, including resumé and career coaching services for remote jobseekers. Resumé assessments and writing, LinkedIn profile enhancement, and cover letter writing are available to maximize the success of your remote job applications. **Discounts on all services available to subscription members, [become one now.](#)**

