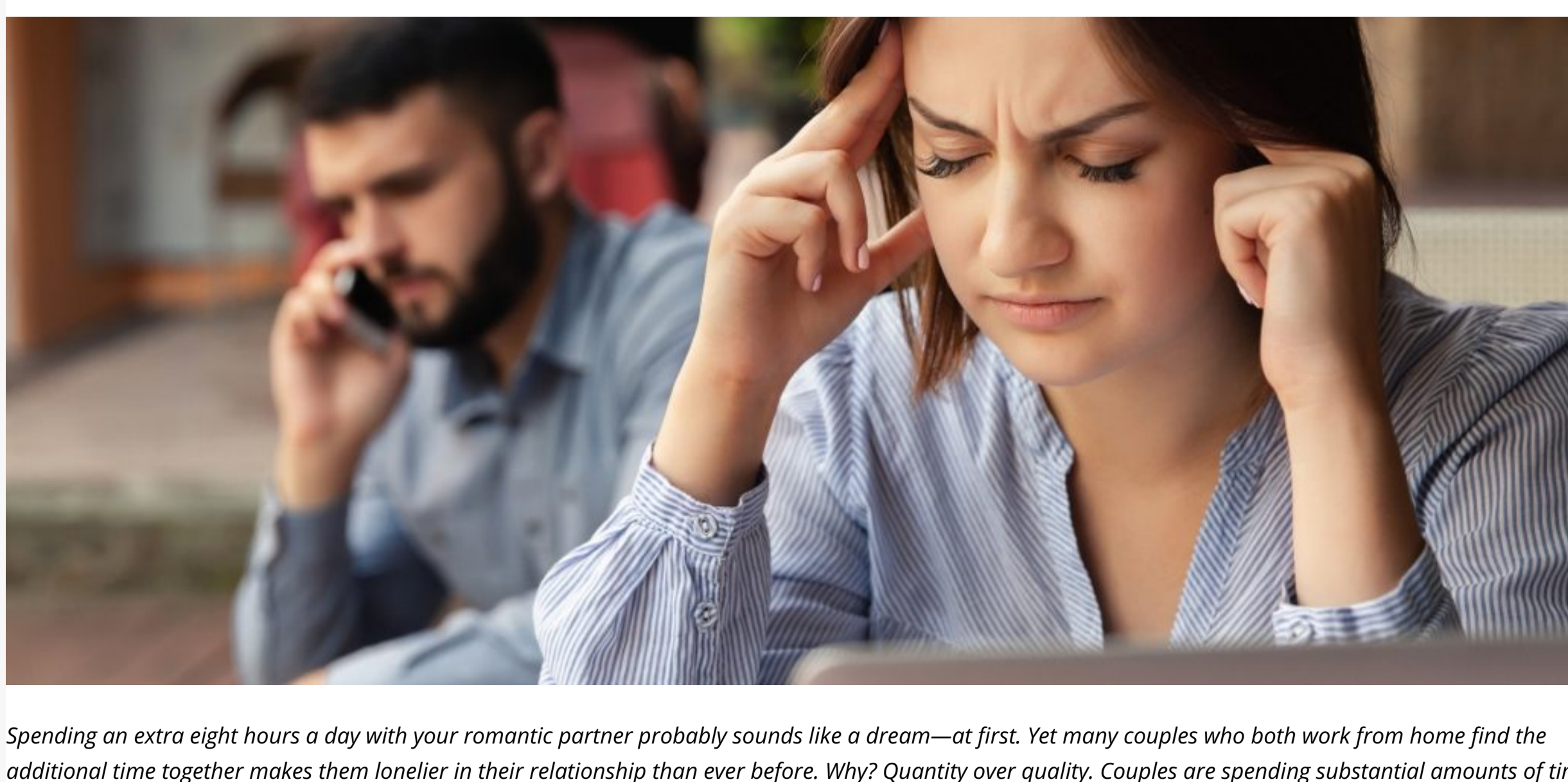


Coworking from Home: 9 Tips to Keep Your Relationship Strong



Spending an extra eight hours a day with your romantic partner probably sounds like a dream—at first. Yet many couples who both work from home find the additional time together makes them lonelier in their relationship than ever before. Why? Quantity over quality. Couples are spending substantial amounts of time together or around one another. As a result, they fail to remember much of their relationship's health rides on the investment of intentional quality time. If you and your significant other are coworking from home, use these nine tips to keep your relationship strong.

1. Prioritize Your Relationship

Unfortunately, being together 24/7 doesn't always equate to domestic bliss. The good news is that a bit of prioritizing can do wonders for a relationship.

Hold a Daily Distraction-Free Time

Start by giving your significant other at least 30 minutes of uninterrupted time each day without technology or too much conversation about work or kids. Turn off the phones and the Kindle, power down the Netflix, and just hang with your partner. Discuss your daily highs and lows, enjoy a glass of wine, meditate or pray together, or share ways you are grateful for one another.

Spend Lunches Together

Like no other pairing, couples who are coworking from home have the perfect built-in opportunity to invest in their relationship over lunch. You don't need to schedule lunches together every day if it's not your preference as a couple or you have other lunchtime obligations. However, sharing one to three lunches a week can boost your connectedness as a couple. Consider using this time to train for a 5K together, discover the best food truck in your city, or work on learning a new language for a trip you plan to take.

Date Your Partner

Whether you've been together 20 days or 20 years, dating keeps a relationship fresh when you're coworking from home. When you mix work and love, it's even more important to do everything you can to keep your relationship healthy and fresh.

Maybe the budget's tight. That's okay. Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator Jamie C. Williams, Ph.D. stresses in her Huffington Post entry that what's most important is that couples make [dating a routine](#). You don't need to spend a lot of money to give your partner two-to-four evenings a month of quality time. Schedule these dates into your calendar at the start of the year so they take priority. Some people recommend a couple of date nights a month that alternate with a couple of evenings out. You just have to figure out what's best for you and your significant other at your stage of life and career.

"Having fun with each other is the key to a healthy marriage, and the best gift we'll give our kids is two parents who love each other for a lifetime." – Jamie C. Williams, Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator

2. Get Creative with Your Spaces

When couples work from home, individualism can suffer. Before long, you're tired of each other. For this type of situation, space and personal freedom can be a relationship-saver, even if you have to create it yourself. Here are a few ways that partners who both work remotely can create some physical space and, consequently, keep their emotional connection from imploding.

Go All Out for Your Home Office

Create separate office spaces at home to maintain a happy relationship and a productive work environment. While not all couples have the square footage to accommodate each person with a full-sized room office, the more your spaces reflect characteristics of typical offices—such as having a door—the better. Not only do you want to develop separate spaces, but also build them as far from each other as possible.

Regardless of how small each office area is, give each space boundaries, like a sign outside that lists the office owner's "office hours." Also, have an understanding that work remains in these office spaces only. Don't move clutter from the living areas of your home into an office to make it appear cleaner for guests or because you're not sure where to store it. And remember, you're only as productive as your equipment. Add the right [mix of office accessories](#) to take your efficiency to the next level.

Explore Your City

If you're starting to get on each other's nerves during the workday, consider switching it up a bit. On your own, one day a week, explore your city to find your favorite remote work location. This could be a coffee shop, park, library, mall, or wherever else you can find a Wi-Fi signal and a satisfactory work environment.

Put up the Money for a Coworking Space

[Coworking spaces may cost a pretty penny](#) with their recent boom in popularity, but finding one both you and your significant other agree on and can alternate spending your days at might just create the space each of you needs to keep your relationship from going up in smoke. Discuss and agree on a budget for a coworking space in your area. Decide on specific amenities each of you need/want, and begin your hunt for the ideal space.

Admittedly, not everyone can afford a fancy coworking space with all the high-end amenities. If you need to give your partner a breather, desk rental agencies such as ShareDesk offer desk spaces at a lower cost. These work great for times when you could use a space outside the home for a few hours or days. Alternatively, you could also reach out to companies locally, ask if they have desks they're open to renting, and negotiate a price from there.

3. Understand Your Personality Type and Love Language

Taking time to investigate both you and your partner's personality types, how they fit together, and potential issues between the two can help create a healthier foundation for your relationship and prevent conflict.

One of the primary areas tests like the Myers-Briggs can provide insight on is whether you are extroverted or introverted. Many people misunderstand these terms to mean whether one is outgoing or shy. Yet they actually have very little to do with these qualities. Introversion and extroversion have to do with the way we recharge, whether we get our energy from being alone or around others. Understanding what personality type means for the amount of alone time you or your significant other need as well as the level at which you both need social interaction allows you to create healthy plans and [routines](#) that should decrease the chances of misunderstandings and miscommunication.

Bring on the Romantic Connections

With a new outlook on how the gears of your partner's mind work, conflicts are less likely to escalate. Additionally, certain personality tests can give you a better idea of what your partner needs from you in the [romantic facet](#) of your relationship.

Another way to gain a better grasp on what your partner needs from you or how to recognize when they're showing they care, even when it doesn't seem that way, is to go through marriage counselor Dr. Gary Chapman's New York Times bestseller, [The 5 Love Languages](#). In his book, Chapman discusses five ways people prefer to receive love, and the ways they naturally give it. People with different personalities express love in a myriad of ways. Once you identify you and your partner's love languages through a quiz, Chapman provides ideas for how to better show one another love.

4. Remember Office Hours Matter

Choose office hours and stick to them. If possible, keep similar hours to your partner. Since most people who work remotely end up working more hours than average, commit to starting and ending work at a certain time. When your office hours end, your laptop shouldn't join you in the kitchen or living room. Neither should your work phone. If your personal cell is connected to your work email, turn off its notifications in the evenings. Shift your focus to your significant other or any evening activities you have scheduled.

5. Coworking from Home? Dress for Work!

You may work in a virtual office, but hygiene and dress are still important. Believe it or not, your poor personal hygiene and image can [negatively impact your partner's productivity](#) levels. In addition, staying in your pajamas all day might sound fun, but doing so can mess with your head. Night clothes prevent your brain from switching to work mode, and you may struggle to focus. As for your own work, poor personal hygiene can make you appear unprofessional in regular video meetings. Waking up, showering, and dressing up for work reminds our brain what our task is at that time. We're not in adventure mode or sleep mode. We're focused on completing our daily work goals.

6. Have a Plan for Dealing With Conflicts

Since disagreements and frustration are inevitable when partners are [coworking remotely](#), you need to plan how you intend to address the dissonance. While you may have your own ideas, here are some basic guidelines to get you started:

- Schedule time to discuss conflicts/disagreements.
- Process your own feelings ahead of time. Try to determine why you feel how you do and what you hope to gain from the conversation.
- Share your feelings with your partner (try to request rather than complain).
- Use "I" when addressing issues about your partner and describe how you feel. Avoid using "you," which is more accusatory, as well as "should."
- Listen to your partner's feelings and perspective and ask clarifying questions.
- Develop any necessary solutions.
- If, at any time, the disagreement becomes too heated, take a break and return to the discussion later.

7. Invest in Childcare When Coworking from Home

Nothing adds stress to a work-from-home couple's relationship like children, especially those who need constant attention. Not having to pay for daycare is one of the perks of working remotely. For this reason, many professionals hesitate to add such a large charge to their monthly bill. However, a part-time babysitter or nanny could lower your childcare burden without costing a fortune. Some couples may not deem the added burden to their home coworking situation worth the possible relationship damage. If that describes you, don't feel shame for bringing someone in full-time to cover your working hours or returning the kids to daycare for a while. Your relationship comes first.

8. Get Involved with a Hobby You Both Enjoy

New experiences that you both enjoy create endorphins in your brain. [Sharing those experiences](#) develops bonds. Pew Research Center found shared interests between couples ranked as more essential to a relationship than a strong sexual connection. Choose a few hobbies that interest you and pursue them together for a strong bonding experience away from coworking from home.

9. Be Proactive About Couples Therapy

As a couple, counseling may seem like a dirty word. But when issues blow up and conflict seems like an untameable monster, counseling is a lifesaver. Research even confirms [prevention is three times more](#) effective than intervention after a conflict. Unfortunately, the average couple waits six years before seeking help. When both members of a relationship are working from home, the perpetual closeness puts additional strain on the relationship. Having a professional guide you through the murky waters of living together and coworking from home will help you grow as a couple.

Don't let coworking from home ruin your relationship. Despite the difficulties, balancing work and relationships when you both work remotely is achievable. Invest the quality time needed to make your relationship thrive.

Do you have relationship tips for coworking from home? Connect with Virtual Vocations on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#) to tell us what you think. We'd love to hear from you!

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