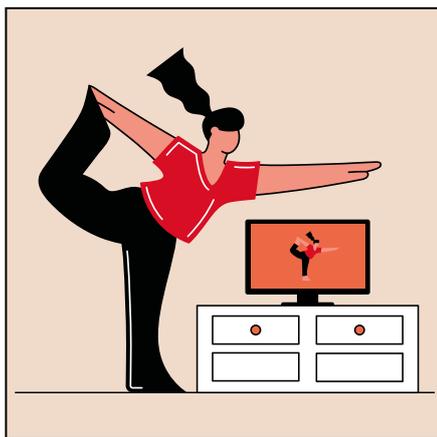


Since 2009 the Toyota Lean Management Centre (TLMC), based at the Deeside engine plant in North Wales, has been using the power of the famous Toyota Production System (TPS) as well as global Toyota Way management concepts, to help companies improve their efficiency by transferring skills and management best practice. TLMC's aim is to provide companies with the lean tools and management behaviours that will enable them to firmly embed lean concepts into their organisation. These principles and the world-famous 'Toyota Way' can also be applied to working from home and the TLMC experts have produced the following advice to help people improve their efficiency.



## 01) BREAK UP THE DAY

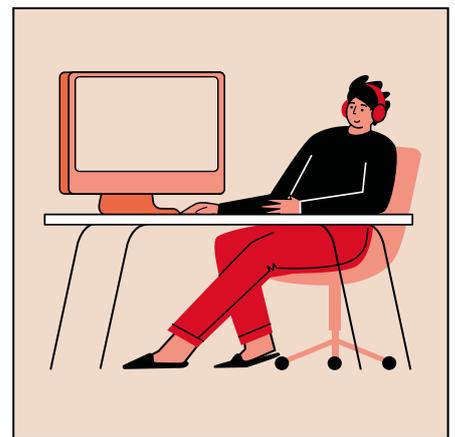
Continuing lockdown restrictions have meant that the world has shrunk as we stay at home for the majority of the time, and ‘work, eat, sleep, repeat’ has become the familiar routine for anyone working from home. Whether working from a fancy home office, at the kitchen table, or from the sofa, there’s a risk that home workers will spend all day in the same location, so TLMC advises breaking up the day with some exercise – even a short walk around the block will help you feel energised and more productive.

The Toyota Production System also practises Jidoka, which is to pause to fix a problem, so apply this principle at home if you face a challenge, rather than leaving it until later.



## 02) KEEP WORK AND HOME SEPARATE

Working from home can blur the line between work and home life, as without the traditional commute that creates a clear distinction between work and home life, it’s easy for a half-hour of TV to creep into the working day, or for emails to be tackled during the evening news. In the same way that factory workers arrive and leave at the same time each day, TLMC advises that it’s important to keep regular work hours when working from home. The Toyota Production System says standardised processes benefit employees, so dress for work as usual and begin work at your normal start time. Consider setting an alarm to mark the end of the working day, as this will replace the usual cue received when colleagues are leaving the workplace.



## 03) CLEAR THE CLUTTER

Mess and clutter can affect your concentration, especially if the kitchen table now doubles as a workstation. This is where the Toyota principle known as 5S can come in handy to keep you organised and productive. In Japanese, the 5S process is: Seiri, Seiton, Seiso, Seiketsu and Shitsuke, which translates into English as: Sort, Set in order, Shine, Standardise and Sustain. It’s clear how this can benefit a production line, with every part stored in the same place to avoid time being lost in trying to find it, and this system can also help anyone working from home. TLMC advice is to remove the items you don’t need and ensure everything you need is to hand before starting work. After using an item, return it to the same location to make it easy to find next time you need it – a place for everything and everything in its place.



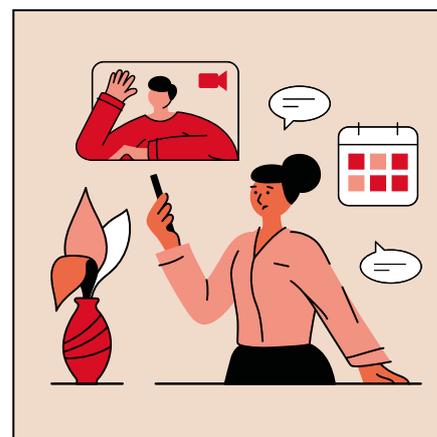
## 04) STAY AWAY FROM THE COOKIE JAR

Snacks are more readily available when working from home. 'Challenge' is part of the Toyota Way and it can be applied to solving this kind of issue – but it also requires huge self-discipline. Challenge yourself to plan what and when you will eat, in the same way that you would pack a lunchbox to take to work. Putting structure into your day should make it easier to avoid the biscuit barrel. It will also help to buy healthy snacks rather than those that are high in sugar and salt, and to plan when you are going to eat them.



## 05) PRACTISE WITH TECHNOLOGY

With no IT department immediately on hand to solve any technical equipment problems; poor wifi, difficulty downloading important files, or webcams focused on your chin, are just some of the issues home workers have to deal with themselves. The Toyota Way encourages Genchi Genbutsu, which means "to visit the actual place and see the actual thing." Apply this to your home working by practising with the remote working technology. For example, host a family quiz night on Zoom with people who will see the funny side of errors. This will provide valuable feedback as well as a safe place to practise. It's also a good idea to load work apps and platforms onto a smartphone or tablet as a backup.



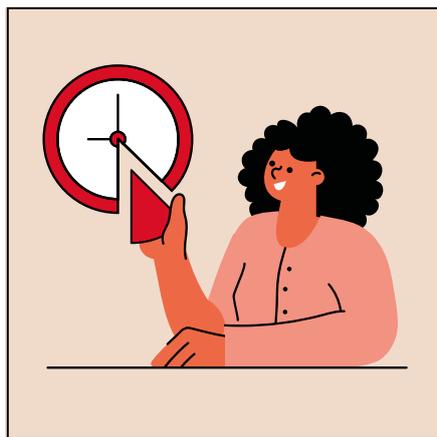
## 06) AVOID MEETING OVERLOAD

The desire to keep in touch has escalated with increased home working, and this can lead to 'mission creep' where too many online meetings mean that there isn't sufficient time to clear the daily 'to do' list. At the same time many of us are facing video-call fatigue and are mentally switching off during calls. The Toyota Way encourages kaizen which is continual improvement of working practices and processes. Continually review invites and don't accept meetings you wouldn't attend in person and for those meetings you do take part in, make an agenda and stick to it. This should mean you join fewer meetings but that the relevance and quality of those increases and your productivity also improves.



## 07) STATUS PARANOIA

Home workers can feel under pressure to prove they are working hard. Mutual trust and respect, an important Toyota Way value, can help here. Identify ‘value added’ work opportunities. For example, if it is useful to sketch or write something by hand, or simply have some thinking time. Don’t feel guilty about closing the computer. The world won’t end if an email goes unanswered for an hour.



## 08) EIGHT HOURS IS A LONG DAY AT HOME

Eight hours is a long time anywhere, whether spent in the workplace, or at home, and it’s difficult to maintain concentration for such a long stretch. Break your work into small chunks so you feel more motivated as you achieve each one. These small chunks will soon add up to one big achievement.



## 09) SPEND FREE TIME WISELY

Working from home means many people have gained more time in their day by not having to commute and there are better uses for this extra time than ‘more work’ or ‘more time in bed’. The Toyota Way helps people by minimising waste, so think about what ‘value-added’ means in your personal life – it could be spending time with someone you love, reading, learning a new hobby, skill, or exercise.

TLMC has a team of highly experienced specialists who will provide a tailored programme of practical training and onsite coaching across all functions and levels within an organisation.

More information can be found at: <https://tlmc.toyotauk.com>