

The home office

A Can you feel your anxiety and stress levels increasing every time you get caught in a traffic jam? Do you find it difficult to control your tongue when your boss points out your shortcomings yet again? Do you just not have the right kind of office attire, hate spending hours shopping for it and, frankly, would feel much better if you only had more independence, more freedom, more flexible hours and fewer people on your back? Do you yearn for state-of-the-art technology in your home, that ... wait for it ... you haven't had to pay for? If you are shouting an enthusiastic 'Yes!' in answer to these questions, then it could be time to make a career and life change that may not even require you to quit your job. Just suggest to your boss that you wish to become one of the new breed of executives whose office is based at home.

B Working from home is a relatively new phenomenon, but is becoming an increasingly popular option with both businesses and employees. The technology available to us now means that we no longer need to be in the same office building as our colleagues to communicate effectively with each other. E-mail, video conferencing, mobile telephones and more, mean that we can do business just as efficiently, regardless of our location.

C Companies may choose to employ a proportion of their staff as home-based workers, as, of course, a workforce set up in such a way requires far less office space and fewer parking facilities. The fixed costs of a business can be dramatically reduced. Employees can enjoy the added benefits of freedom to schedule the day as they choose and freedom to spend more time at home with their families. Working from home can be a particularly valid option for young mothers who wish to pursue their careers but find it impossible to be out of the house for nine or ten hours per day.

D We can even go so far as to say that the working-from-home phenomenon could be one of the answers to the pollution problems which the modern world has inflicted upon itself. Fewer people travelling to work every day equals fewer cars. Fewer cars, of course, equates to lower CO₂ levels in the atmosphere. Governments have been trying for years to change how we commute to work, attempting to persuade us to forsake our private car journey to work each day for the hideous experience of a crowded bus or train. Most of us have been resistant, even when parking fees in city areas have been on the rise and unpredictable traffic patterns mean we have to leave our house 30 minutes earlier than necessary anyway. But working from home gives us no excuse whatsoever to emit CO₂ into the atmosphere twice a day in our working week.

E But what are the drawbacks to working from home? There must be some or everybody would be doing it. For many of us, work is a means of escaping our nearest and dearest and making our own mark on the world. The relationships we have with our colleagues, be they good or bad, are a significant part of our life – after all, full-time workers spend a third of their day in their workplace. After-hours pursuits of a game of squash or a pint in the pub become part of our daily routine. We cement sound friendships at work and an astounding percentage of us meet our life partner at our place of work. The people there have similar ambitions and business interests and we are, after all, social animals. The majority of us become depressed and withdrawn if we do not have enough interaction with others. Some people who work from home feel that, because they do spend a large proportion of the day at home alone with few distractions, they are actually much more productive and can get tasks done in a much shorter time than in an office environment. Others, however, may be demotivated by the isolation and find it difficult to get down to tasks which have a more intangible deadline.

F As with most aspects of life, a balance is probably the best solution for the majority of workers – a job based at home which requires regular contact with colleagues at regular meetings. Management surveys show that successful business is easier if we operate as a team: brainstorming and sharing ideas and offering support and motivation to each other. After all, we are only human and we need others to complain to if we have a bad day at work!

Complete the sentences below. Use **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS**.

1 Working from home has been made possible by advances in .

▼ [Show answer](#)

2 With fewer requirements for space, businesses can reduce their .

▼ [Show answer](#)

3 Despite political pressure, most people have not changed how they to work.

▼ [Show answer](#)

4 For some people, working at home can have a negative impact as the can cause them to lose motivation.

Complete the summary by using words from the box below.

Technology has allowed us to (5)..... at home instead of the office. For the company, there are (6) incentives and for the employee, there is more (7)..... . There are even (8)..... for the environment. However, there is a (9)..... factor to be considered.

benefits	flexibility	workplace
release	psychological	financial

survive	conduct business
friendships	environment