



## TELECOMMUTING ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

### Activities and Ideas to Help Remote Workers Stay Engaged

While many employees have always secretly wished for the opportunity to work from home, it's not as easy as people envision. It can be difficult to set up a schedule and routine and then follow it on a daily basis. Distractions are plentiful both at home and from colleagues. If you have several members of your household at home, there are times when you're on a Zoom call (and forgot to mute your microphone), you can hear the continuous chime of emails coming in, someone is trying to Skype with you, text alerts are going off on your phone, your child needs a drink of water, the dog is barking, and your significant other is presenting in a virtual meeting on the other side of the room. Raise your hand if you've been there. Talk about overload.

All of this adds to the stress and anxiety that comes with the unknowns associated with these unprecedented times of the Coronavirus pandemic and 'safer at home/stay at home' directives. Needless to say, we all need breaks from the chaos.

### Practice Healthy Habits

Here are some healthy habits you can recommend to your employees as they work to establish their new normal.

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day
- Follow your normal 'go to work' routine, e.g., shower, dress, make your bed, eat breakfast, etc.
- Take a short break (a few minutes) every hour to stand up, stretch and take a few steps.
- Take a 15-minute break every two hours and move – take a walk, dance around the room, go up and down the stairs and stretch – just get the blood pumping
- Take a lunch break – completely unplug for lunch – make it a tech-free zone; move, eat, rest your eyes and meditate (no tech necessary – just close your eyes and think happy, grateful thoughts)
- Add 30 minutes (or more) of exercise to your routine after work – play with your children, take a walk as a family (remember social distancing when you see your neighbors), dance to your favorite tunes, watch a workout video, bowl a few games on Wii, etc.
- Eat healthy foods
- Stay hydrated
- Get plenty of sleep

Visit our new [Virtual Self-Care Wellness page](#) for more resources and tips.

### Mix It Up with Fun Team Activities

Everyone needs a break. Many UCI people leaders have shared what they are doing to stay connected to employees while much of UCI's workforce is telecommuting. Here are some of our favorites:

- Run pulse surveys, e.g., A or B questions work great (Pepsi or Coke, baseball or football, ocean or lake, dog or cat, etc.); [check out Qualtrics](#), a UCI-authorized application to set up surveys
- Share pictures, e.g., change the theme each week (highlight of your remote work week, seen/scene in your neighborhood – the crazier or more intriguing the better, photo scavenger hunt – everyone sends a picture of something pink, for example)
- Email a question(s) for your team to answer as an icebreaker during your next call (see our Twenty Questions PDF)

- Host virtual 10:00 a.m. coffee chats for 15 minutes – team members join and chat while enjoying their morning beverage
- Host virtual 3:00 p.m. stretch breaks
- Hold a “What Matters to Me and Why” meeting; every team member comes prepared with one thing to share with the team from home that they treasure
- Set up extracurricular activities. Create a book club, a multi-player online tournament, or just an internal social network for people to share experiences (how to stay healthy, best indoor exercise tips, favorite recipes, TV and movie recommendations, etc.) – some teams have even set up a movie night where they all watch a movie at the same time and share the experience virtually
- To help everyone stay focused in virtual calls (where it’s easy to be multitasking), inform employees at the start of a meeting that everyone will be asked to share something they learned in the meeting (that “ah ha” moment) at the end of the meeting – this helps everyone stay focused
- Assign fun activities such as asking everyone to virtually visit the same museum or zoo, and then the next day or the next week, share what they liked best during their ‘visit. Use this link to assign virtual visits to The San Diego Zoo, The Louvre, Sistine Chapel and more (or just provide these links to your employees as a fun resource for them to use with the family and friends):
  - [Twenty Amazing Places You Can Visit Without Leaving Home](#) by Travel Zoo
  - [The Ultimate Guide of Free Resources & Things to do During the Coronavirus Quarantine](#) by The Cheese Chat

## **RESOURCES FOR LEADERS**

Brush up on what experts are saying about engagement and remote work. Here's a collection of some of the best articles, videos and podcasts we've found.

### **Read**

- [Covid-19 Has My Teams Working Remotely: A Guide for Leaders](#) Gallup
- [Engaging Remote Workers \(COVID-19\)](#) SHRM
- [5 Remote Employee Engagement Secrets That Work](#) ITA Group
- [Creative Ways to Keep Remote Employees Engaged](#) Bamboo HR
- [10 Easy Ways to Keep Remote Workers Happy and Engaged](#) Bonusly
- [5 Remote Employee Engagement Activities Every Disruptive Brand Will Be Doing By 2025](#) High Fidelity
- [13 Creative Virtual Team Building Activities for Remote Teams](#) Museum Hack
- [UCOP Tips on Working Productively While Telecommuting](#) UCOP
- [UC EAP Resources on Coronavirus](#) UCOP
- [COVID-19 Has My Teams Working Remotely: A Guide for Leaders](#) Gallup
- [Working from Home Because of COVID-19? Here Are Some Tips That'll Keep You Sane and Healthy People](#)
- [How to Manage the Loneliness and Isolation of Remote Workers](#) Gallup
- [The Rules of Video Conferencing at Home](#) CNN
- [Working Remote? These Are the Biggest Dos and Don'ts of Video Conferencing](#) Entrepreneur
- [The No. 1 Employee Benefit That No One is Talking About \(People Leave Managers, Not Companies\)](#) Gallup

### **Watch**

- [UCI DCE: Remote Work in the Age of Global Change](#)
- [Punch through Pandemics with Psychological Science](#)
- [Jacob Morgan Webcast: How Chipotle is Investing in Their People](#)
- [Gallup Webcast: Building Employee Engagement Through High Performing Managers](#)

## **Listen**

- Engaging™ People Podcast: Keeping Optimism in the Workplace
- Engaging™ People Podcast: Listening to Your Employees Through the Coronavirus
- NPR Podcast – TED Radio Hour: The Meaning of Work

## **Contact**

If you have any questions or need assistance with your engagement efforts, please reach out to your HRBP, local HR representative, or UCI's engagement team:

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