



BRIX*Coworking*

Work From Home (WFH) to Work From Coworking (WFC):

**The Beginner's Guide to Leaving
Your House and Joining a Dynamic
Workspace Community**



When work from home doesn't work

Working remotely can provide many benefits: flexibility, independence, savings.

But perhaps you're finding that working from home is hindering your production and you need a different environment. You're not alone.

Your home environment provides many distractions when trying to work. Perhaps you have kids running around or pets that need attention. If you're not used to working from home, there are probably everyday noises to get used to, like your neighbor mowing their lawn.

It may also just generally be hard to focus when you're working from the same place where you decompress in the evenings.

There are additional problems if someone else in your home is also working. Is there enough space for you both to take calls privately? Do your work styles mesh well together? Can you take breaks from one another's presence? Focusing on your own work needs is hard enough, but adding another person to the mix can make it even more stressful.

Working from home can also cause mental health problems. According to [a 2019 report from Buffer](#), 19% of remote workers struggle with loneliness. This impact of isolation should not be taken lightly as it has shown it can be [more harmful to physical and mental health](#) than obesity.

Isolation also hinders work productivity because many people need relationships with their managers and coworkers in order to work effectively. The ability to interact with others contributes to emotional and mental wellness and fosters collaboration and a comfortable work environment.

Burnout is another common mental health problem associated with working from home. The same 2019 report from Buffer finds that 22% of remote workers struggle with unplugging after work.

Research from [a joint ILO-Eurofound report](#) found that remote workers globally tend to work longer hours than their counterparts in the office. Working such long hours under stress can lead to emotional, mental and physical exhaustion. Not only is this counterproductive to completing work, but it also tends to affect other areas of your life, especially your relationships with loved ones.

Even if you do think working from home is sufficient, it may be affecting you in ways you're not even aware of. In the same way that research says not to do work in bed, [working from home can have similar effects](#). When you work from bed, your brain then has a hard time relaxing because it associates your bed with work instead of sleep.

In the same way, working from home is no longer associated with relaxation and downtime when it also serves as your office.

In order to maintain a healthy work-life balance and allow your home to remain an escape from work, consider coworking instead. Coworking spaces are on the rise, and this guide will help you make the transition from working from home to working while coworking seamlessly.



The Ultimate Guide to Coworking

What is coworking?

Coworking is an alternative to working from home or in a standard office. It offers flexibility to remote workers with the amenities of an office. It consists of a shared space, often with communal equipment, where individuals work independently but build a community of shared ideas and knowledge.

Coworking is a global movement. [According to JLL](#), the coworking sector has been growing at an average annual rate of 23% since 2010. It is predicted that there will be more than 30,432 coworking spaces and over 5.1 million coworking members by the year 2022, [according to Coworker.com](#).

This movement is only going to grow bigger, and now is a great time to make the transition.

Who should cowork?

While coworking can benefit everyone, those who may benefit most are [remote workers](#), [freelancers](#), [entrepreneurs](#) and [musicians](#). These individuals tend to work on their own schedules and need a space where they can focus on their work and hold professional conversations.

If you fall under one of these categories, you should seriously consider the benefits of coworking.



When should you cowork?

If you've been working from home for a while or have utilized a different remote work set-up and you're starting to lose steam in your current environment, it may be time to turn to coworking. [Consider these four criteria](#) when deciding if it's time for you to make the transition:

- 1. You need a break**—Especially if you live with other people, it is beneficial to have time apart, which is hard to achieve when you are working and living in the same space. Making your home your workplace can strain a relationship, and it might be best to keep your work life separate from your home life.
- 2. You need to improve your wellbeing**—Having a dedicated coworking space provides a disruption in the monotony of being home constantly and requires you to move, which is good for your physical health. Not only are you moving your body, but movement has also been proven to help cement memory and learning, both of which are helpful to productivity. Additionally, having a space to move to helps you keep track of time, which is easy to lose track of when spending all of your hours at home. This prevents you from overworking and maintaining an unhealthy work-life balance.
- 3. You need motivation**—The monotony of working from home isn't just bad for your wellbeing, it also hinders your motivation. Coworking is a great way to get energized because you can tap into the buzz of the people around you. Just being in an environment with other people can be stimulating, and the change of scenery may be just that you need to kickstart that ambition.
- 4. You need to innovate**—Creativity and innovation come most naturally when you have the opportunity to learn new things, connect with people and be stimulated by what is happening around you. Coworking provides the face-to-face interaction that tends to generate the best creative solutions, and the fact that professionals from various industries utilize the same space means there are unique perspectives to bounce ideas off of.



Coworking in action

What does it look like?

Coworking spaces generally have a mixture of flex desks, dedicated desks and private offices as work stations and offer conference rooms and communal seating. Some coworking spaces may provide a break area that includes recreational equipment like a pool table or television, while others might have a cafe.

The structure of coworking spaces varies greatly, but each provides reliable Wi-Fi, an individual workstation and a collaborative space.

Coworking formats

One of the best parts about coworking is that you can choose the workspace that works best for you. Most coworking spaces offer the following options:

Flex desks—This is a seating option that does not “belong” to you but is available to all members of the coworking space. It provides you a professional place to work that isn’t a crowded coffee shop or your own home. This is ideal for someone who only needs the space for a few hours each day and doesn’t mind sitting in an open space to get things done. Flex desks provide many of the same amenities as dedicated desks and private offices (i.e., Wi-Fi, printer access, meeting spaces) but at a lower cost because you will need to take your stuff home each night.

Dedicated desks—This option does belong to you as long as your membership is active. You have the freedom to set up your desk however you like it, and you don’t have to worry about carrying around your stuff all the time. A dedicated desk will cost you a bit more, but it tends to come with a locking cabinet and gives you a semi-private space.

Private offices—This will give you the most privacy but will also be the most expensive option. This is a great option for someone who needs absolute privacy or if you need a dedicated space for a small group of people. As with a dedicated desk, you can set up this space however you like, and you can keep your belongings secure in your locked office.

How will I interact with others in the space?

One of the main reasons people like coworking is because of the community. Individuals from different backgrounds and work sectors come together in this space to focus on their projects and goals. This creates a diverse community that has the opportunity to network and collaborate, sharing knowledge and ideas from unique perspectives.

How you interact with others is up to you, but building relationships with other members is one of the best ways to get the most out of your coworking space. You have the opportunity to learn from people with different skillsets, and you can make connections that will help you further down the road.

For example, you might be a freelance graphic designer. By getting to know the remote lawyer down the hall, you could build a camaraderie that leads to that lawyer referring his friends who need design work to you.

The coworking space is still a working environment, though, so don't bother people who have their headphones in or their heads down. It is important to respect their space. Maintain a polite noise level, and use a phone booth if you need to take a call.

Establishing yourself as someone who is respectful of others will help you thrive in the coworking space.

What about noise levels?

Whether you're at home or in an office, there is always a bit of noise going on. It could be your neighbor mowing the lawn or the receptionist down the hall taking a call. A coworking space also comes with a bit of noise, but it can be easily negated with a good pair of headphones.

People who are members of a coworking space understand and respect the fact that everyone is there to work, so noise levels are kept at a professional level. Coworking won't be completely silent, but it will be comparable to a standard office and significantly quieter than a coffee shop or cafe.

If you are someone who really needs silence, there are usually private office options.



Why Coworking?

Now that you have a better understanding of what coworking is and what it tends to look like, you may be wondering why it continues to grow in popularity. Individuals turn to coworking to maintain their work-life balance, engage with others in collaboration and save money on fully renting a private office space.

[There are many benefits to coworking](#), and what follows are just a few of the main ones:

Pros

Flexibility

Coworking allows remote workers flexibility in their schedule, location and space. Early birds and night owls can relax because those who are used to working their own hours can still do this while coworking as many coworking spaces offer 24/7 keycard access.

As coworking grows, there are more and more spaces becoming available in cities and suburbs. Coworking allows a person to pick a place that may be closer to home or closer to clients. Whether your priority is meeting your clients where they are or getting home quickly, there is likely a coworking location that can accommodate your needs.

Finally, coworking also allows flexibility in space. From hot desks to private rooms, coworking spaces offer as much or as little as you need. Rather than paying and furnishing an entire office, you have the option to pay only for what you use, such as a single desk that you'll occupy just three days of the week.

Coworking spaces are turnkey ready, so you don't have to worry about furniture, utilities or office equipment. Instead, you can select a space that meets your needs.

Networking and collaborating

Remember that loneliness factor that affects 19% of remote workers? Coworking helps combat that. These communal spaces offer opportunities for networking and collaboration.

Even though you may be working for separate companies on different projects, coworking allows you to build camaraderie with coworking community members. It offers the opportunity to meet people in other business fields and learn from them. Not only can you gain valuable knowledge that can help with your own work, but you can build relationships with people whose networks you then have access to down the road.

In addition to networking, collaboration is another benefit of working in a space with individuals from a variety of work sectors. Many coworking spaces are symbiotic ecosystems where you can connect with freelancers, workers and entrepreneurs of all types, giving you a wide breadth of ideas.

Having so many unique perspectives may give you a creativity boost and improve your overall work.

Change of scenery

Utilizing a coworking space means your home can remain a home. This is important to maintaining good mental health. The change of scenery allows you to associate work with the coworking space rather than your home. Hopefully, this makes it easier for you to unplug and stop working once you leave for the day, just like you would in an office.

Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is essential to avoiding burnout, and a coworking space could be what you need to save yourself from your job.

Coworking spaces also generally have a “vibe” that fosters creativity and productivity.

Everyone there is pursuing their own goals, and this energy tends to be contagious. If you have a hard time finding motivation on your own, working among other people may help you stay focused during the day and be more productive.

The change of scenery also offers a place to go to during breaks. At home, a break might be stepping away from the computer and turning on Netflix for half an hour, which may not be the most effective way to decompress for a bit. Coworking spaces usually offer break areas where you can chat with other community members and physically get away from your work.

The connections you make with others in the coworking space will help improve your mental health and provide incentives for continuing to come into work—wins for both you and your company!

Cost savings

Renting an office for yourself can be very pricey. Furnishing the room, purchasing equipment and paying for utilities add up quickly, and this can be a drain on your or your company's finances.

Coworking helps mitigate the costs by providing shared amenities. Things like high-speed Wi-Fi, complimentary beverages (water, coffee, tea), printing, locker storage and more are often included, which can be huge money savers for an individual.

There's no reason for you to go buy a printer you'll only use occasionally when one comes included in your coworking membership.

Cons

While there are numerous advantages to coworking, there are a few possible disadvantages that may not mesh well with your working style. [Coworking may not be right for you if:](#)

- You can't stand the sound of someone else typing or talking on the phone and cannot afford one of the more private options coworking spaces sometimes offer. The open-plan spaces tend to have a similar noise level to a regular office filled with cubicles.
- Conflict management is not your strong suit. There is not an HR department to turn to if someone in the space is causing problems, so you need to be prepared on the off chance you need to confront someone and work out a solution.
- The normal 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. hours don't work for you. Some coworking spaces are only open during normal business hours, which can cause problems if you're a night owl or early riser. Different spaces have different hours, though, so be sure to check out all of your options.
- Your work involves highly confidential or sensitive data. A phone booth for private conversations can only do so much, so you may not feel comfortable working in a coworking space without robust security protocols in place.

As you can see, the pros of coworking greatly outweigh the cons, but there are clearly some reasons coworking may not be for you.

If you are thinking of just going to the local coffee shop instead, though, you might want to reconsider. Next, we will take a look at some of these other options and see if they can truly provide what you need.



Other Work Environments

Perhaps you're thinking you'll save even more money by working at a local cafe or coffee shop for free. Just like coworking, this would provide you a space that is separate from your home so you can maintain your work-life balance.

But a coffee shop or cafe can't provide all of your needs. While this may seem like a tempting idea, these spaces are not built to cater to the working individual and may cause additional problems.

Before deciding to ditch coworking, [think about these concerns](#):

- **Noise level**

Cafes and coffee shops often try to create a relaxing ambiance, which may include playing music louder than you'd prefer. It is also possible that other patrons will be talking loudly to one another or on their phones. While coworking spaces may also have some background noise, it will generally be at a professional level, and most places also offer more private options.

- **"Coworkers"**

You don't know who will walk in next at the local coffee shop or cafe. It could be a rowdy customer or a family of four. These people can be loud and distracting and end up hindering your ability to work more than getting out of the house helped it. Thankfully, those in coworking spaces tend to be there for the same purpose: to get work done. This means you don't have to worry about major distractions or anyone being too rowdy for the space.

- **Reliability**

If the coffee shop or cafe of your choosing does offer free Wi-Fi, is it really reliable? Even the most upscale restaurants can have connectivity issues. A coworking space is dedicated to work, so you can be sure that a fast, secure network is a priority.

- **Seating**

Even if you're a regular customer at this specific cafe, you may not be able to find a seat every time you need it or you may be forced to sit in an area that is distracting or missing outlets. The seating situation in a coffee shop or cafe is dependent upon the other customers, but a coworking space gives you a dedicated space for a specific amount of time.

- **Security**

Public Wi-Fi is always risky when it comes to keeping your passwords and other content private, and the coffee shops and cafes themselves are not responsible for monitoring your personal belongings if you have to go to the bathroom. Coworking spaces solve this problem by having secure lockers and requiring keycards to enter the building.

- **Cost**

Is working at that coffee shop or cafe really free? Some places require you to make a purchase every few hours in order to keep your spot. If you're working there all day, that could be a \$5 charge every few hours. This ends up being comparable to the price of maintaining a membership with a coworking space, and at least you'll have more of the amenities you need at that location.



Making the leap

What to consider when choosing a coworking space

Once you've decided coworking sounds like a good option for your work environment, it is important to find the right space. From commute to meeting spaces, different coworking spaces will offer different benefits.

To decide which one is right for you, [consider these questions](#):

- 1. What are your goals and expectations for this space?** Some coworking spaces offer more options for collaborating with coworkers, while others have quiet private spaces.
- 2. What is your preferred location?** While a downtown location might be more expensive, it could be helpful for meeting with clients. Or perhaps you want an office space close to home.
- 3. How much time will you spend in the coworking space?** Look into flexible options if you only plan to need a space two or three times a week.
- 4. What amenities do you need?** Many coworking spaces try to replicate the feeling of a typical office, so they may provide complimentary beverages, business-class printers and phone booths for private calls.
- 5. What is your best working environment?** Whether you are the kind of person who doesn't mind a bit of noise or you need absolute silence while working, coworking spaces probably have an option for you.
- 6. What are your meeting needs?** If you are someone who will often need to host clients or who works best when collaborating with your team, be sure to look for a coworking space that has plenty of conference rooms and meeting areas.

Choosing the best coworking space for you is important not only for your work productivity but also for your commitment to working outside of the home. You won't want to make the commute to a space you are not comfortable in. Be sure to find somewhere that fits your needs so you are able to establish a routine and feel good about the space you're occupying during working hours.

Working with your company to negotiate paying for a coworking space

You need this coworking space to complete work for your company. Why not ask the company to foot the bill? Before you get to the asking stage, be sure you've established yourself as a reliable, productive employee. Then do the research as to why paying for a coworking space would benefit the company, and have a plan for how you'll present the request.

If you're someone who works remotely for a company where most of the employees work from an office, it might be as easy as pointing out that paying for a coworking space for you is essentially what the company is already doing for everyone else by paying for an office space.

It may also help if you crunched the numbers and pointed out how much would be saved on internet access, printer costs and other amenities. It's harder for a boss to argue with the numbers if they can see the savings laid out before them.

If you have historically worked from home, it may be time to discuss mental health and productivity benefits—both of which can be negatively affected by the loneliness that can accompany working from home. Many remote workers who utilize coworking spaces work better when they can build camaraderie with the coworking community.

Once you've determined why your company should pay for your coworking space, it is time to figure out how to [present the request](#). If you can afford to front the initial few months' cost, it might be effective to start working in a coworking space and proving how much it improves your work productivity. This could provide a path of least resistance if the company is able to see the drastic improvement in your work that coworking has provided.

If you can't afford to try coworking on your own first, however, [be sure to have a plan for your presentation](#). First, ask your boss to schedule a meeting with you. It is important that this conversation not be seen as a casual chat, so make sure it gets on both of your calendars and is taken seriously.

Then present a full proposal of how you will work remotely. From how you will communicate and be accessible to how you'll manage your tasks and team, thoroughly explain to your boss how you will handle these concerns. It may also be helpful to have a few coworking options to present so your boss can immediately consider the cost and benefits. Doing more research and providing more information can only help your cause.

Don't be afraid to ease into the full request either. Perhaps start by asking for a trial period. Similar to fronting the cost yourself and showing the results of coworking, a trial period means your company is not committed to a long-term lease and has the opportunity to see coworking in action. This is a great idea if your employer is on the fence.

If you are able to convince your company to pay for your coworking space, show them the cost is worth it by checking in regularly and continuing to provide high-quality work. The more you can prove that a coworking space has improved your ability to work productively, the more likely the company is to continue paying for it.

Reserving space

Now that you have established that you want to work from coworking, it's time to reserve a space. Keeping your priorities in mind, find a few coworking options and tour them just like you would a home. Remember, this is a place you'll spend most of your working hours, so you want to choose something that makes you feel comfortable but also productive.

If you can, talk to people who already have memberships with the space and determine if the community is the right fit for you. Is the space catered toward the artistic, creative types, the corporate executives or a mix of everyone? This can also help you begin building relationships should this be the space you end up choosing.

Another helpful tip is to [get to know the manager](#) of the coworking space. This person will have good knowledge of the people in the space and can introduce you to people who can help you professionally. The manager is also in charge of maintaining the space, so you can ask questions, give feedback and share your ideas for making the space as effective as possible.

Once you've gotten a feel for the space and picked one that works best for you, it's time to select a membership plan and sign the papers. Rather than a lease, a coworking space grants its members [a license](#). This is an agreement that grants members only part of the premises to use or only provides temporary or intermittent use of the property. It is important that you understand the terms of this agreement, which include key clauses like fees, permitted use, termination and coworking space rules.

The full transition

It's here. Today is your first day working from your new coworking space. As you prepare to enter your new work environment, [keep these final tips in mind](#):

Get to know your coworking community

You already know how great the coworking community can be for networking and collaborating. In order to benefit from the knowledge and idea sharing, you have to get to know your officemates first! Don't be afraid to introduce yourself. You want to make sure you are friendly and approachable from day one if you want to build relationships with these people that will benefit you mentally, emotionally and professionally.

Give it a trial run

Don't give up after your first day. Change doesn't happen overnight, and coworking can take some time to get used to, especially if you are unfamiliar with working in such an environment. It may take a few days to find your rhythm and determine what works best for you. Maybe the noise in the open space is too much for you and you need to upgrade to a private office. Perhaps you find you need the space less frequently than you anticipated. Coworking is flexible, so give it a month or so to show you how it can meet your needs.

Step out of your comfort zone

Whether you're used to the corporate office or have worked on your own for years, don't be afraid to get out of your comfort zone and try new things. Whether it's participating in an after-work social hosted by the coworking space or talking with an officemate about an unfamiliar business area, embracing the opportunities coworking provides will help you get the most out of your membership and grow as an individual.



Final thoughts

Whether you're ready to make the transition from working from home to working from coworking or you're still on the fence, it is clear that coworking is not going anywhere. The market is expected to reach [\\$11.52 billion in 2023](#) at a compound annual growth rate of 11.8%. Having a better understanding of this growing sector will keep you abreast of its trends and help you work with people who may be members of coworking spaces themselves.

If you want to learn more about coworking or want to check out a space yourself, contact [Brix Coworking](#), a company with two coworking locations in Madison, Wisconsin. Brix provides affordable coworking and workspace solutions for small businesses, remote workers, entrepreneurs, freelancers and musicians.

[Connect with Brix Coworking](#) today to schedule a tour and get more information.

Book a Workspace