

Career Advice

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Working from home might be right for you

If you spend most of your day working on a PC in an office, you may be a good candidate to work from home. Working from home, also called telework or remote work, offers many advantages. You can save money on gas, parking and other costs associated with commuting to work every day, including wear and tear on your vehicle.

Research also shows people who work from home spend less on business attire and dining-out expenses, take off less for being sick, and can be more productive on the job.

Q. How do you know if working from home is right for you?

A. Not everyone is self-motivated enough to work from home, or comfortable enough to work alone with little or no supervision. With the internet, office intranets, and technology like teleconferencing support interaction and collaboration with remote co-workers, you may need in-person mentoring or on-the-job training. Or, you may simply prefer the inter-office comradery and on-site visibility necessary to learn the business and foster career-advancement opportunities. You also might be the type of person who needs to be physically present when tasked with managing others. You might also consider working only part-time from home, perhaps just one or two days a week.

Q. What skills do I need to work from home?

A. You must be good at your job and already possess whatever skills are needed in your profession to suc-



ceed. You'll need to be comfortable with technology to work remotely and communicate effectively with your associates, whether they're downtown, on the mainland or halfway around the world. In addition to proficiency in your job, working from home requires a lot of "soft skills"

like dependability, responsibility and the ability to inspire confidence and trustworthiness in your management and peers.

Q. What else should I know about working from home?

A. Don't try telework if you think working from home will enable you to look after your keiki or kupuna. While working from home can provide more flexibility and work/life balance, you will likely have regular hours that require you to be at your desk and available for co-workers, vendors or clients via email, phone or online. It takes discipline to stay focused on the job, a lot more so than when you're physically in an office environment. It's advisable to have a dedicated office space in your home, preferably with its own door so you can shut out the background noise or interruptions from family members to focus on your job. Not everyone can limit the distractions that often happen when you work at home.

Furthermore, find out more about the opportunities, advantages and obstacles of working from home by asking other people who telework, especially those in the same industry with similar positions to yours. They can share their experience to help you better understand if remote work is right for you.