Do we work better at home or at 1,5 meter?

Lode Godderis & Liesbeth Daenen

March 25, 2021
Telework in the European Union

Share of employed persons usually working from home, 2019

Netherlands
Finland
Luxembourg
Austria
Denmark
Ireland
France
Belgium
Estonia
Portugal
Malta
Sweden
EU
Germany
Spain
Czechia
Poland
Slovakia
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Greece
Croatia
Cyprus
Hungary
Romania
Bulgaria

United Kingdom
Ireland
Norway
Switzerland

ec.europa.eu/eurostat

www.ec.europa.eu, 2020
Telework during COVID-19 pandemic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of work during COVID pandemic</th>
<th>% of employees</th>
<th>Weekly hours worked</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home only</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various: home, employer’s premises and elsewhere</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>(of which 19.3 hours at home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer’s premises or other locations outside home only</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All employees</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Weekly hours are capped at 100.

www.ec.europa.eu, 2020
Impact on mental health
Anxiety/Depression

Anxiety/Depression (at least 2 of the 4 complaints)

Telecommuters (at all 4 times) (n = 669)

Non-telecommuters (at all 4 times) (n = 197)
Social Dysfunction

Social Dysfunction (at least 3 of the 6 complaints)

Telecommuters (at all 4 times) (n = 669)  Non-telecommuters (at all 4 times) (n = 197)

Lockdown  Exit strategy  Catering, borders, contact sports,...
Fear and depression

Single parents with children are experiencing the most fear and feelings of depression.

48% Single without children in the household
54% Single parent with children in the household
42% Couple without children in the household
49% Couple with children in the household

Less fear and depression
for employees in organisations with a **safety climate**, family-supportive culture and workplace flexibility.

Percentage suffering fear and depression

- Weak to moderate safety climate: 55%
- Strong safety climate: 40%
- Weak to moderately family-supportive organisational culture: 55%
- Strongly family-supportive organisational culture: 39%
- No workplace flexibility: 53%
- Some workplace flexibility: 44%

Impact on job resources

Psychosocial Safety Climate

Telecommuters (at all 4 times) (n = 669)  Non-telecommuters (at all 4 times) (n = 197)
Impact on job resources

Family-Supportive Culture

Telecommuters (at all 4 times) (n = 669)
Non-telecommuters (at all 4 times) (n = 197)
Impact on job resources

Job satisfaction (at least rather satisfied)

Telecommuters (at all 4 times) (n = 669)

Non-telecommuters (at all 4 times) (n = 197)
Higher job satisfaction with the provision of clear information and adequate social support from supervisors in times of Covid-19.

Impact on job resources

Social Support Supervisor

Telecommuters (at all 4 times) (n = 669)  Non-telecommuters (at all 4 times) (n = 197)
c^-paths

- Extent of telecommuting
- Emotional exhaustion
- Cynicism
- Work engagement
- Cognitive stress complaints

Vanderelst et al. 2017
Lessons learned: Five factors of Telework

Individual: personality + situation

Environment: safety + legal

Job: nature + technology

Organisation: strategy + culture

Home + Family

Belzunegui-Eraso and Erro-Garcés, 2020
Impact on physical health
OptiDesk telework survey

- New version of IDEWE*’s online self-assessment tool for the office worker, completely adapted to the needs of the telehomeworker
- 475 Belgian telecommuters
- March until June, 2020 (Belgian’s first lockdown)

* Belgian external service for prevention and protection at work
Musculoskeletal disorders

TELEWORK – The lower, the better

Daenen, Verwimp, Godderis, 2020

**representative group of 950 Belgian office workers (weighted for gender, age, language and degree)**
Musculoskeletal disorders

WORK-RELATED – The lower, the better

Daenen, Verwimp, Godderis, 2020

**representative group of 950 Belgian office workers (weighted for gender, age, language and degree)**
Ergonomics

TELEWORK – The lower, the better

- Desk chair: Height, back rest, seat depth, dynamic, arm rests (n = 475)
- Work surface: Height, space above/below (n = 475)
- Screen: Desktop-Laptop: Height, position vis-à-vis head/window, distance eyes (n = 471)
- Screen: Tablet: (n = 0)

**representative group of 950 Belgian office workers (weighted for gender, age, language and degree)

Daenen, Verwimp, Godderis, 2020
**Movement**

TELEWORK – The lower, the better

Prolonged computer work
- % workers: more than 1 hour
  - Participants: 80%
  - Benchmark: 68%

Exercises
- During a short interruption
  - % workers: no
- Physically active
  - Every day at least 30 minutes
  - % workers: no

Physically active
- % workers: 41%
- Benchmark: 47%

**representative group of 950 Belgian office workers (weighted for gender, age, language and degree)**

Daenen, Verwimp, Godderis, 2020
Lessons learned
Optimise workstation design and move

How to set up my desk?

1. feet flat on the ground
2. seat height: pelvis above the knees
3. seat depth: leave a gap the size of your fist between your knee pit and the chair
4. lower back support: convex shape above the waistband
5. table at elbow level
6. top edge of the screen at eye level
7. viewing distance: an arm’s length
8. keyboard: relaxed posture, support your hands and wrists
9. enough space to use the mouse
10. take regular breaks from sitting down

Solutions for unexpected telework

Recommended situation for teleworkers

www.very.be, november 2020
Lessons learned
From hybrid to activity-based / human-based working

A new light on work
Lessons learned
Activity-based / human-based working

How to:
Create an Activity-Based Work Environment
Lessons learned: bricks, bytes & behaviour
Future-proof post-corona workplace
Contact

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