

PUBLICATION

A Baker's Dozen: Tips from In-House Counsel

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The current normal requires intentionality and flexibility. Below, in-house counsel from various organizations share a Baker's Dozen tips on how to manage and work through remote work, home life, and other impacts of COVID-19.

Monika Luken, *Senior Legal Counsel North America*, CCL Industries

1. Schedule a regular (e.g. weekly) meeting with other in-house counsel to ensure everyone is giving consistent advice.
2. Create an outside counsel advisory of four-five outside counsel who have enough knowledge base to cover all of the United States on employment (or your key areas of interest) issues (*i.e.* I have one person in the Midwest, one on the west coast, one in the south, one in New Jersey/New York). In-house counsel must be able to rely on outside counsel to respond quickly and remain updated.
3. Make your home office comfortable and functional. This includes getting a good printer/scanner and monitor.

Chaney Nichols, *Senior Counsel, Litigation*, International Paper Company

4. Don't neglect your physical and mental wellness. With the massive amount of grim news in the media, balanced with working remotely under new, more challenging conditions, anxieties can run high. To cope, I make a conscious effort to push away from the laptop, stretch and take a 15-minute walk outdoors numerous times throughout the day. Walking the dog, feeling the sunshine and hearing the birds chirp in my neighborhood does a lot for "recharging my battery." I purchased a fitness watch at the beginning of the pandemic with a step counter that prompts me to "get up and move" when I've been sedentary for too long, which definitely helps to keep me mentally and physically on track. This new routine is something I plan to carry forward into the new "post-pandemic" world.

Julie Baker, *Senior Counsel, Employment Litigation*, Jones Lang LaSalle

5. Keep your to-do list on your calendar – both so you can block out time when needed to get certain tasks done and so you can roll it over day-to-day as needed.

Leah M. Rackley, *Associate General Counsel*, Fannie Mae

6. Plan the remote workday like a typical in-office workday and include start and end times, breaks, and a lunch.

Nicole M. Grida, *Senior Counsel, Litigation*, International Paper Company

7. Get dressed and prepared for work every day.
8. Have a dedicated space for work, away from a bedroom or living room, if possible.
9. Alternate sitting and standing to avoid sedentary issues.
10. Build breaks into your day for stretching, walking and relaxing.

11. Consider using a "Pomodoro Method Timer" to accomplish your daily tasks. Each Pomodoro is a 25-minute cycle followed by a 5-minute break. After the fourth Pomodoro, you take a 15-minute break. The key is to be completely focused on the task at hand for 25 minutes. There are apps that you can download to help with this method.
12. Have a video conference often to remain engaged with your team.
13. Give yourself some grace as some days will be better than others.

These 13 tips are transferable to all, even outside counsel. Ultimately, it is important to find what works for you and be ready to adapt as the current normal continues to evolve.