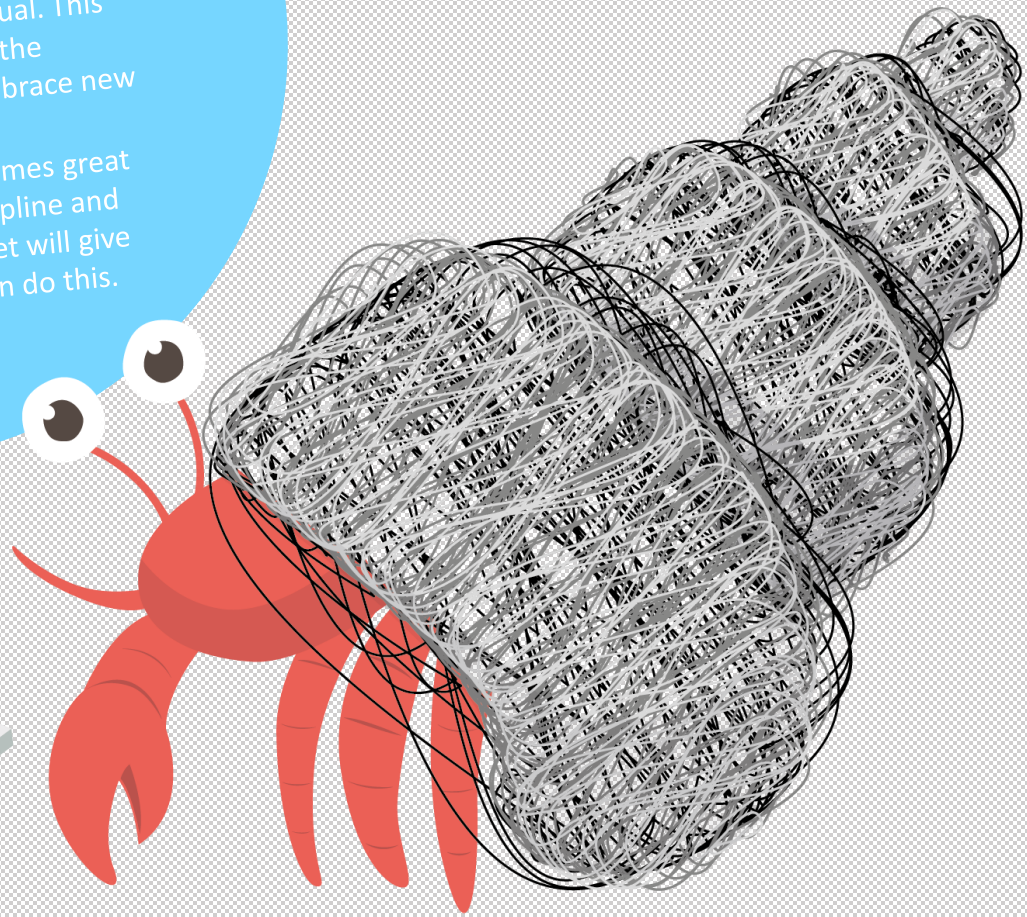
CHEAT SHEET

LAUGHOLOGY

WORKING REMOTELY AND STRUCTURING YOUR TIME

Workplaces are no longer central locations with set hours. Increasingly they are decentralised, sometimes international and often virtual. This means employees can kiss the commute goodbye and embrace new ways of working.

But with great freedom comes great responsibility for self discipline and structure. This cheat sheet will give you practical ways you can do this.



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WORKING REMOTELY

CFREATE THE RIGHT MINDSET

This might seem counter-intuitive when we talk about flexible work patterns, but in order to maintain productive virtual working, it helps to have a traditional workplace mindset. Get a routine. Get up. Get dressed. Be ready to work by a certain time and don't get distracted by other chores. Then let others in your organisation know when you are at work and available.

STRUCTURE YOUR TIME

We all work best at different times. Some people are full of energy and ideas in the morning, while others are night owls. Get to know your own rhythm and plan your day and tasks around it. For example, if are more alert in the morning, do your most complex tasks then and leave the more routine stuff for later in the day.

Start your day with a routine. It might be as simple as making a cup of tea and having breakfast, going for walk or run or catching up with the news. Create a morning routine that ends with you starting work.

If you are on a deadline, don't get distracted by emails or unscheduled calls. Turn off notifications on your phone. Better still, put it in another room. You don't have to answer every query immediately.

Don't let people hijack or monopolise your time if it's not important.

Try to leave your home regularly. Your body needs to move. Plus, the fresh air and natural light will do you good. Talk a walk. Go to the shops. Have lunch out once a week.

Create a habit that signals the close of the workday. It might be a sign off from the work system or booking a fitness class for a certain time. Whatever you choose, do it consistently to help your brain switch off from work mode.

HAVE A GO

Use productivity tools such as a Pomodoro timer, which divides your time into 25-minute chunks punctuated with five-minute breaks. Work solidly through the longer periods and spend the five minutes checking your emails. Learn more about this on our learn page.

Use a to-do list and set times to deliver each piece of work through the day. You won't always be able to stick rigidly to it, but it gives you guidelines to follow and helps you structure each day.

Communicate your work schedule to colleagues and other in your home. If you have kids or are caring for others, let them know when its work time.

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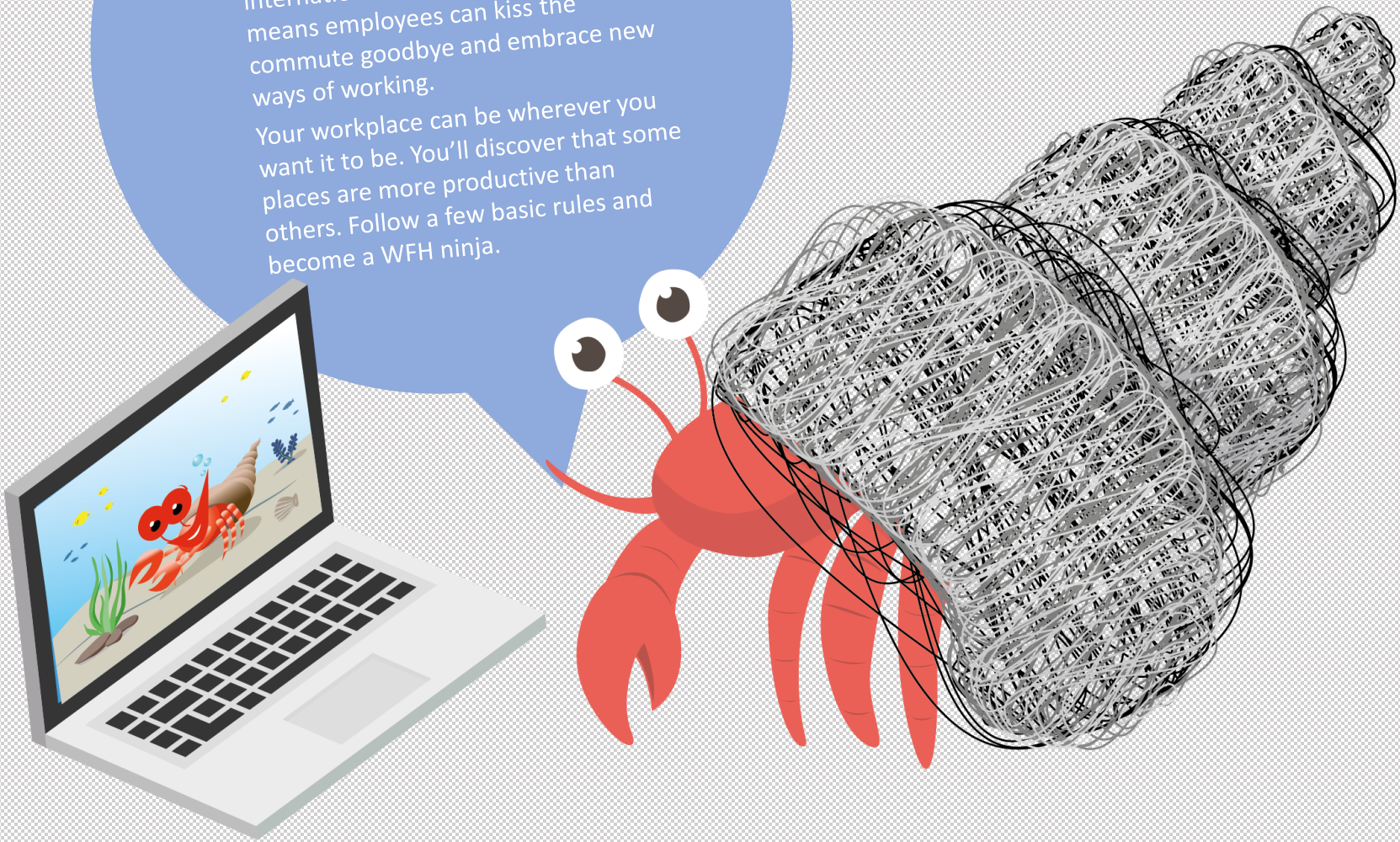
Workplaces are no longer central locations with set hours. Increasingly they are decentralised, sometimes international and often virtual. This means employees can kiss the commute goodbye and embrace new ways of working.

Your workplace can be wherever you want it to be. You'll discover that some places are more productive than others. Follow a few basic rules and become a WFH ninja.



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WORKING REMOTELY

GET THE BALANCE RIGHT

Having the right environment in which to work helps you get into the right mindset. If you are working from home, it's important to have boundaries between work space and home space. And if you prefer to work from 'third spaces' such as cafes, make sure distractions are kept to a minimum.

CREATE THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

Environment matters when you work remotely. If you can, have a space in the house that's your office, even if it's somewhere you set up at the start of the day and pack away at the end. The feeling of leaving it behind helps with your routine.

In an ideal world, remote employees would not only have a dedicated office, but also two computers, one for work and one for personal use. It's more secure and it lets you do all your NSFW activities in private. Having a separate work phone line can also be a good idea. It could be a landline, second mobile phone, a SIM card or a free VoIP service such as Skype.

If remote working means being out and about, chose locations carefully. A busy coffee shop is not the best place for an important call or virtual meeting, neither is a windswept park. Make sure you are somewhere you can hear and be heard, with a good connection that will not keep dropping off.

If you're communicating via a video link, keep background distractions to a minimum. If you are out, go somewhere quiet. Indoors, shut doors to reduce the risk of stray toddlers or errant cats. If you can, wear a headset with microphone. This negates distractions, frees up your hands to take notes and makes you look cool, like Madonna in the nineties.

HAVE A GO

If you share a house, let others know in advance what your diary is for each day and flag up any times when you cannot be disturbed. If you have a home office, put a do not disturb Post-It note on the door.
Partition your hard drive to creating a separate user account for work and set up a folder system within it that works for you.
Create a workspace that is comfortable, but not too comfortable. Working on the sofa in front of the telly or in bed is not ideal. Get dressed and get yourself into a work mindset. Working in your pjs eating Honey Loops from the box may sound great, but it doesn't promote productivity.