

10 Ideas for Supporting Wellbeing in Hybrid Work

A Guide for HR and Team Leaders

cuckoo



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Many organisations have transitioned to hybrid work following the pandemic. Despite some public discussions urging employees to return to the office, remote and hybrid work has become the new normal, and a full return to 100% office work seems unlikely.

Hybrid work offers many advantages, such as:

- Increased free time by eliminating commuting
- More efficient work due to fewer interruptions
- Improved work-life balance

Since employees value flexibility and the ability to balance work and personal life, hybrid models not only enhance employee retention but also help attract new talent. Organisations that can implement a truly functional hybrid model increase their attractiveness and ability to retain employees.

However, hybrid work also presents challenges, and many organizations are still defining best practices. To help address these challenges, we have created this guide outlining **ten key areas to focus on to support wellbeing in hybrid work.**

1. Establish Clear *Ground Rules*



If the rules of hybrid working are unclear, the uncertainty of the situation can increase the feeling of stress. Therefore, it is crucial to clarify the common ground rules within the work community. Start by agreeing together on at least the following basics:

- When and where work takes place. How should remote and office work be synchronised? How should employees communicate on their designated work location?
- Which communication channels should be used for different purposes? Clearly define how urgent matters should be communicated.
- Availability expectations. Work-life balance improves if employees can turn off work notifications outside of working hours.
- When does it make sense to work in the office versus remotely? Traveling to the office just to sit in virtual meetings may not be necessary, but in-person brainstorming sessions can benefit the whole team.
- Task allocation and reporting responsibilities. Clarify roles to prevent misunderstandings. Consider adjusting reporting structures or increasing check-ins to facilitate support and collaboration.

2. Make Work Meaningful



A sense of purpose enhances wellbeing. One of the most important roles of leaders is to articulate the organisation's mission and value to the world.

The sense of meaningful work is built on different emotions. Reflect as a team on how your work environment fosters these feelings:

- **Autonomy** – Having a say in how work is done and setting personally meaningful goals.
- **Competence** – The ability to use skills effectively and continue learning.
- **Belonging** – A workplace where employees are valued and cared for.
- **Doing good** – A sense that work positively affects others and the world.



How could you strengthen these experiences for your team?

3. Upgrade Work Tools & Ergonomics



For hybrid work to be effective, working conditions must be adequate both at home and in the office.

Consider ways to support productivity and wellbeing in remote work. Do employees have reliable internet connections? Can you assist with ergonomic home office setups? Are posture and break habits being addressed?

Here are some ergonomic tips for hybrid work:

- Create a standing desk using household items, such as placing a chair or stool on a table. Use creativity when creating your remote work space.
- The best working position is always the next one. Change positions regularly. Set a timer to remind you or use smart reminders like Cuckoo to prompt posture changes.
- Avoid working in the bedroom if possible. This can negatively impact sleep quality.
- Don't forget to take breaks! At home, it's easy to get deeply absorbed in work, but regular breaks are essential for wellbeing. Apps like Cuckoo remind employees to take breaks and suggest suitable activities.

4. Take Care of Social Connections



Hybrid work can make casual interactions rare, but social bonds are crucial for mental health. Make an active effort to keep relationships strong:

- Schedule regular one-on-one check-ins to ensure employees feel heard and supported. Remember to ask how people are feeling!
- Plan social moments where focus is not on working, such as virtual coffee breaks, team lunches, or monthly after work game nights.
- Mark communal breaks in the calendar throughout the workdays. A daily shared break, for example through Cuckoo, reminds to take a break and fosters natural social interaction.
- Have weekly virtual coffee breaks. Choose an interesting topic for discussion, such as AI or favorite movies.



Did you know that maintaining social connections strengthens brain health? So, make sure to set aside time in meetings to catch up with your team before diving into the agenda.

5. Enable *Flexibility*



In a good employment relationship, flexibility works both ways. Flexible work includes flexibility in working hours, the location of work, and the tools used to carry out the work, tailored to suit each individual best.

Hybrid work often promotes a better work-life balance. However, setting common ground rules is important. Discuss when employees are expected to be available and what times are appropriate for sending messages.

6. Encourage Making Use of *Extra Time*

One of the benefits of hybrid work is the extra hours gained from not commuting. Employees can be encouraged to allocate this time to activities that support their wellbeing, such as exercise, lunch walks, or reading a book, for example, through various wellness goals.

Could you set wellbeing goals during one-on-one discussions with managers or create company-wide initiatives, such as wellness weeks?

7. Ensure Good Conditions for *the Brain*



For knowledge workers, the most important tool is the brain. Thus, taking care of cognitive ergonomics is crucial. Ensuring this is a shared responsibility between individuals and the work community.

The role of the work community is to ensure that the culture supports brain-friendly working methods, while the individual is responsible for implementing them. Support your employees' cognitive ergonomics by encouraging the following:

- **Reduce Work Interruptions.** It's important to enable employees to work without interruptions. For example, designate one day a week without meetings or allocate the first hour of the day for focused work.
- **Avoid Multitasking.** Strengthen the opportunity to complete tasks at one's own pace and one task at a time. Turn off work app notifications and handle emails during times when they won't disrupt thinking.
- **Take Regular Breaks.** Sufficient breaks and light exercise support brain function and concentration. Remind employees of the importance of regular breaks and provide tools for taking them.

8. *Monitor Wellbeing and Work Capacity*



To ensure the effectiveness and adequacy of wellbeing initiatives, it's important to closely monitor employee wellbeing.

An annual wellbeing survey may not provide timely enough data. A more frequent pulse survey offers real-time insights that allow for quick reactions. Also, remember to ask about wellbeing in everyday interactions, as this gives employees a chance to share how they're doing.

9. *Offer Training*

In hybrid work, it's helpful to assess if there are areas where additional training is needed. Many managers may be overseeing remote teams for the first time.

Training might be needed in areas like remote leadership practices, such as delegation and running virtual meetings. Encourage employees to share what they're already doing well and where they might need support.

10. Invest in *Smart Breaks*



Taking breaks has a significant impact on employee wellbeing. In remote work, natural breaks and movement are less frequent since there's no need to walk to the printer or meeting room.

The type of break matters as well. Scrolling through social media while seated doesn't refresh the body or mind. A quality, active break revitalises and helps employees temporarily disconnect from work.

To maintain optimal work performance throughout the day, it's important to encourage employees to take regular, active breaks.

A study by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health found that taking breaks from sitting and work using **Cuckoo**:

- Reduces harmful **sitting time**
- Enhances work **recovery**
- Improves company culture and **community**
- Reduces **sick leaves**
- Increases energy and **productivity** at work
- Reduces **musculoskeletal pain**

We build productive and thriving work communities.

Cuckoo is an easy-to-use wellness app that encourages taking active micro-breaks during the workday. The app notifies you when it's time for a break and suggests what to do during that time.

Would you like to learn more about how Cuckoo supports employee wellbeing in hybrid work?

[Get in touch with us.](#)

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