

## Dispelling the Work at Home Myths

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How often have you been accused of not really working if you work from home? Many people think that working at home isn't working at all, and that you have all of the free time in the world. Those who have spent any time working at home know that there is a lot of time and energy that goes into effectively working at home. Friends who call in the middle of the day, spouses who expect you to be doing more while home or family members who make offhand comments, can undermine those efforts.

Not all stay at home moms work, and if you have friends who don't it can be hard for them to understand that your days aren't free. Calls during your working time, invitations to lunch and uninvited guests can throw a wrench in your work schedule. In order to get your friends to respect your time, it's important to make your working schedule clear to them.

If you don't have a clear work schedule, then it is time to make one for yourself. By setting office hours for yourself, you make it clear to everyone around you that you are serious about your work. It will also help set boundaries for your time. Tell your friends that you will be unavailable from a certain time to a certain time, but you'd love to talk before or after those times. You may even go so far as to turn off your phone. If you do answer the phone and someone wants to chat, politely let them know that you are working but can speak after a certain time. Also, schedule things like lunches or visits for one day per week. This way you'll reduce the drop-ins and spontaneous invitations.

Spouses can sometimes have difficulty understanding why, if you are home all day, the housework isn't done. This problem can best be solved by familiarizing him with the nature of your business. Show him exactly what you need to do each day, and how long it takes to do each task. Help him understand your work schedule, and how much time you need to work per day. Showing exactly how much money you are making will help him realize the benefits of your work as well. Then ask him to help you come up with solutions for working at home and maintaining the household. Make a list of things that need to be done each week, and assign duties to you, him and the children (if they are old enough). Then taking care of the house becomes a family priority and something that you all share responsibility in. Notify him of any special projects by keeping a work calendar on the wall. That way he can see what is going on with your work schedule, and why you have ordered pizza for dinner three times in the last week!

Many Wahms can be hurt over offhand comments about working at home. Family or even friends can say things like "Well you have the time, because you are at home." In situations like these, you have two choices. You can either get upset and offer a flustered defense or you can take their comments with a grain of salt and offer a calm response. Depending on the situation you can say something like "Well, let me check my work schedule. I know I am not available on these days" or "That would be great on Friday afternoon, which is when I leave time in my work schedule for those types of things."

Remember, working at home is new territory for many people although the numbers of Wahms are

growing. It may take some time for the average person to understand the commitment and scheduling that it takes to effectively work from home. Some people are just too narrow-minded to change their view to understand you can be more productive working from home.