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IWIRC NEWSLETTER

Connecting Women Worldwide



Connecting in the Time of COVID

IWIRC is committed to promoting and connecting women in insolvency and restructuring worldwide. Recognizing different things work better (or worse) for each person, we wanted to share some tips and tricks for navigating professional and personal obligations in this challenging new environment. Hopefully one or two will resonate with you!

Gather the right tools for the job and find a dedicated workspace:

- Make your tech work for you! Get blue tooth headphones so you can listen to telephonic hearings and participate in calls while remaining hands free. Tired of typing on a tiny laptop? Get a good key board and a larger monitor (or two), your hands and eyes will thank you. While you're at it, get a good chair (or run the risk of needing elbow pads!).
- Create a dedicated space for working. You may be lucky to have a home office. If not, don't worry! You can carve out a space to keep your work things in order and set boundaries. After growing tired of shuffling her work computer and papers from the dining room table to the living room and back again, one member reports she successfully converted a baby changing table in to a desk!
- Find things that make you happy to put in your new workspace, be it snacks, a picture of someone or something you love, or just a pretty color.



Schedule and set expectations:

- To the extent possible, maintain regular hours in order to preserve a boundary between work and personal time, and respect boundaries set by others. It's easy for the hours – and now weeks – to blur together. Set yourself up to succeed by scheduling your work time as well as a few breaks. Talk to your partner and/or house mates about what your day looks like the night before or first thing in the morning, especially if you have important calls or video conferences scheduled that you may need to have them distract (*aka* TRY to keep quiet) the kids and/or pets.

While keeping a schedule is great, member **Rosa Evergreen** (Arnold & Porter, Washington, D.C.) reports she also loves to take breaks at different times – e.g., walk her dog when the light and sun are at their best – even if that means working a little late.

- As many of our members have realized, working from home with kids who want their mother's full attention as a result of the anxiety they are feeling is difficult. Luckily, member **Charla Smith** (BDO Canada Limited) has a hot tip: "One thing that is working really well for me is getting up early and getting a couple of hours in on the computer before anyone else wakes up. This allows for a period of quiet time for those tasks that require a sustained period of focus. It also allows me to take a longer break later in the morning to help the kids get their day going in the right direction." Follow Charla's lead and set your alarm to hit the ground running! Or for you night owls, set aside an hour or two once the kids are in bed.

- For those with preschool age children with a regular naptime, member **Amy Vulpio** (White and Williams LLP, Philadelphia) recommends scheduling calls or tackling important tasks when your little ones are down for their midday snooze.

- This may not be possible for everyone, but one member reports she tries really hard to not work weekends (even if that means longer hours during the week) to keep the days – and now weeks! – from blurring together.

Get out of your pajamas – or at least put on your fancy PJs!

- While some recommend getting dressed every day, you can use the opportunity to be comfortable. Just be sure you're presentable (at least from the waist up!) if you have to hop on a video conference!
- If you must appear by video, you can quickly add a blazer or sweater to look polished.
- No time to wash or dry your hair? Slip on a headband! Practical and pretty.
- Jewelry can also make a statement. As member **CC Schnapp** (U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Atlanta) reports: "I for one am embracing the opportunity to wear leggings every day, but I always put on earrings!"
- Or don your headphones and workout gear and (safely) stroll around your neighborhood to get some exercise and fresh air during conference calls.



Zippering off to a Zoom?

- Adjust your camera if it is too high or too low – you can prepare by propping your computer up so the camera is pointed at your eyes, not up at your chin.
- Consider your environment and clean up the space around you to have a simple background (while your dirty clothes may be piled high on an unmade bed, there's no need for everyone to know!). Or opt for a fun "fake" background to cover up your surroundings!
- Make sure you're in a well-lit space and shy away from back lighting; make sure most of the light is in front of you (behind your monitor). If you have a window behind you, try shutting the blinds. Your colleagues will appreciate being able to see your face.
- Launch your video meeting a minute or two before the call is scheduled to begin to test your audio, mic, and video.
- Pop in wireless headphones to hear clearly and sound better.
- Look at the camera when you're talking - but mute your mic when you're not!
- While tempting, try not to multi-task too much. While you can enjoy a drink (coffee, champagne, we won't judge!), refrain from eating a full meal and other private behavior (remember everyone can see you). Switch off your video if you want to enjoy a bite of that sandwich.



Take a deep breath – you're doing great!

- While your house may be a mess, and work may be challenging to fit in, take a moment to take a deep breath and have a laugh. This is not the time to be tough on yourself.
- Enjoy the little things – whether it's lunch with your family, baking banana bread, mastering making cold brew for an afternoon treat, or walking around the block.
- Take a moment to connect with friends and colleagues.
- And, of course, be sure to join us for our upcoming IWIRC programs!



Let us know – what did we miss? What's working for you? Send us your suggestions at news@iwirc.com!



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