

WORKING FROM HOME? HOW TO BOOST YOUR INTERNET SPEED

by Mark Henricks

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One major challenge when working from home is staying productive. And the technology you're using—particularly your internet connection—can make or break your efficiency.

That is especially true now, with so many people stationed at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With multiple household members relying on the same internet for everything from video calls for work to distance learning to entertainment, slow internet is a common frustration.

"If you're working from home—especially if you are doing a lot of phone or video calls over the internet—you have to have a good internet connection," says Luca Jacobellis, president of Atlanta-based small business managed IT services provider [Onepath](#).

Here are some ways business owners can improve their internet speed and productivity from home:

Go bigger on bandwidth

A DSL or a low-bandwidth broadband internet connection designed for home use may be inadequate if you have a spouse, kids or other household members using the same connection for streaming TV and music, playing video games, distance learning and other work. How much bandwidth you need to maintain fast speeds across all your household's devices depends on how many devices and applications are being used at once. And don't want to forget about mobile phones and connected devices that may be consistently relying on your home Wi-Fi network.

Given the variability of home internet use, consider upgrading your internet plan to one that offers more bandwidth. That way you won't need to worry about your internet connection slowing you down.

Use Wi-Fi router controls

Data-gobbling business applications, downloading large files and server hosting may cause a bottleneck on home internet connections. However, a simple tweak of your home Wi-Fi router controls can help.

"If you're sharing a connection with your family, then consider using your router's Quality of Service (QoS) settings to prioritize your own bandwidth over other devices in the house," suggests Paul Bischoff of the technology research and comparison firm [Comparitech](#). Routers from different makers use various processes for changing software QoS settings, but the job is simple enough for many users to do themselves by logging onto their routers using a web browser.

Consider an internet connection exclusively for business

If your company's internet reliance is high—and you're concerned about your home internet usage sapping your productivity—you may want a business internet connection established at your home that can be used exclusively for business purposes. This lets you work efficiently without worrying about, say, a child streaming movies or video games in the next room over.

Take advantage of online productivity tools

There are also a host of tools home-based business owners can use to make the most of the internet. Good examples include the collaboration and meeting tools that can help you [manage a remote team](#) or communicate with customers. Those include tools such as [Microsoft Teams](#), [Zoom](#) and [Webex](#). "If you're going to be working remotely and need to meet with a customer, you need a tool like that," Jacobellis says.

Review your office tech setup

Productivity isn't all about connections and software. Home-based work is also more productive with the right fixtures and accessories. "That might include a desk, office chair, second monitor and a mouse instead of a trackpad," Bischoff says.

Jacobellis recommends business owners consider a larger monitor and a headset to use when conferencing rather than relying on a laptop's built-in microphone. "Their productivity could be down because they don't have the right equipment," he says.

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