

# HAVING A HARD TIME FOCUSING ON WORK?

**Body Doubling is helping remote workers get more done**

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Remote work has become a new normal for many businesses and organizations. The once-familiar office environment has given way to home offices and flexible workspaces. While there are many advantages to remote work, it also presents some unique challenges, from distractions and isolation to a constant struggle to stay focused and productive.

However, there's a simple yet highly effective technique that's been catching on in the world of remote work – body doubling.

Body doubling – essentially two or more people working in the presence of each other – was originally adopted by the ADHD community but is catching on with remote and hybrid workers. Some remote workers say they feel easily distracted and less productive when working alone, so they turn to body doubling – either in the same room or virtually – because it mimics an office setting. The idea is that when someone else is working, you will concentrate better and get more done.



## Remote workers say body doubling helps them feel less isolated and more productive.

Body doubling brings an element of accountability and outside influence into your workday. Many remote workers report feeling more motivated seeing their co-workers busy at work alongside them, and it makes it easier to stay on task. Additionally, many report that the feeling of being held accountable boosts feelings of being valued. Surveys also suggest that work-life balance is positively affected, as a stricter routine is established when two or more people are purposefully working in a space simultaneously.

## FOR MANY REMOTE WORKERS, BODY DOUBLING HAS BECOME A GAME-CHANGER.

While body doubling hasn't yet been extensively researched, experts say when we're surrounded by others working hard we naturally want to mimic them. Some suggest this is because of 'mirror neurons' which allow us to empathize and emulate others. Essentially, mirror neurons are a type of brain cell that respond in kind when we witness someone else perform the same action.



### Additional benefits of body doubling:

- Because of the decreased social isolation, body doubling practices can lead to new friendships with individuals who you already have at least two things in common with: being a remote worker and benefiting from a shared workplace. The benefits of having friends in the office include things like stress reduction and an increase in effort, achievement, and mental well-being.
- Body doubling can halt procrastination and get people to stop putting off tasks.
- People who struggle with ADHD may especially benefit from body doubling, as there is often judgment and stigma surrounding their work styles and patterns. Many of the benefits of body doubling – like less procrastination, better time management, and staying motivated – match areas where individuals with ADHD often struggle. In fact, the term body doubling itself was originally coined by ADHD therapists.



## Steps to start body doubling:

- **Find the right partner.** Who you choose to body double has a big impact on your success. The key is finding someone you would be comfortable and productive in a space with, and who can work quietly by themselves.
- **Outline a clear agreement.** You and your body double should be on the same page about what a workday will look like, and how to deal with distractions. For example, you will both need to know if interaction is acceptable and what kind. You should also share the intentions of your session; this way you can be held accountable if you get off track.
- **Try out different approaches.** There are different ways of body doubling. You and your partner should try it both virtually and in-person. The goal is to find out what works best for the both of you. If your body double has all different preferences, consider finding someone who more closely matches your work style.

In addition to finding your own body doubling partners, there are companies that offer online workspaces aimed to apply positive pressure when working remotely. Some of these services offer monthly subscriptions and allow a small online group of remote and hybrid workers to stay focused together. It's kind of like going to the gym rather than working out alone.

Some free platforms that some remote workers are using include YouTube 'work with me' videos and TikTok live streams (where people prop up their phones and stream themselves working from home, as if their phone wasn't there).

## The power of collaboration can help motivate remote workers and keep them on task.

Remember, body doubling should reduce stress, not create it. A partner that increases productivity and reduces stress is the goal. If you're finding the opposite to be true, you may want to look further to find a pairing that works.

It's important to keep in mind that body doubling is not just about being more productive – it's also about fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. By embracing the concept of body doubling, remote workers can find the balance, motivation, and connection they need to thrive in this new era of work.

