**The FriYAY Podcast Series**

**Transcript for Episode 1:** Home Office Tips for Everyone with Jill Fleming

*(Introduction Music)*

It’s Fri-Yay, Fri-Yay, Fri-Yay, FriYAY! (woo!)

*(Fast guitar-picking music)*

**Narrator:**Welcome to the FriYAY Podcast Series from PPFL. Each week we interview interesting experts in a variety of disciplines from underwater basket-weaving to animal husbandry. On today’s podcast, we’re talking to Jill Fleming of Smart Organizing Solutions. Sally Mayberry, our Communications Manager, conducted the interview.

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**Sally Mayberry, Byline:**We are here with Jill Fleming from Smart Organizing Solutions and she’s going to provide some tips around home officing. And in full disclosure, I will tell you that Jill is my awesome cousin. So let’s get things kicked off and let me introduce you to Jill.

**Jill Fleming**:  
Hi everybody, thanks so much for having me. You know we are living in an historic time and many people are now having to work from home for the first time. And while it won’t necessarily be business as usual, it is do-able. I want to share some tips to help you navigate the transition from an “away office” to a home office, and set you up for success.

**Sally:**  
So let’s start off by asking you, how do we create a space at home that translates into an efficient workspace?

**Jill:**

Well, you need to pick the best location in your home that will meet both your needs and those of your family. For instance, if you are on the phone for a majority of the day, the kitchen table is probably not the best choice. People are in and out preparing lunch or snacks, using the sink, so it will be distracting and can also be loud. Whether it’s a spare room, a corner in the basement or your dining table, it’s important to have a dedicated space for your office. This gives you a place to go in the morning and leave at the end of the day.

If you can’t dedicate a non-shared space, just keep it simple and keep it portable. If your dining room table is your office by day and it needs to function as your dining table at night, then you need to keep things simple and sparse supply-wise. That will make it easier for you to move it when you shut things down for your work day.

Make sure you have what you need. Outlets, stable Wi-Fi, office supplies. Don’t go crazy on this one – just have on hand what you need to work efficiently. I think, one thing we’re all learning is that we can get by with less.

**Sally:**  
Those are great tips, thank you. I also have a question about how do I juggle being at home and being at work, when they are the same place? I’m not used to that.

**Jill:**

Yeah, a lot of people aren’t, so that’s a great question. The most important thing is to create a schedule and be consistent. As a professional organizer I’ve learned that routines and structure actually help reduce anxiety. So have a schedule and keep the location of your new at-home office consistent. Keep to a morning routine. Set regular hours. Just like you would at the office, take a lunch break. And take a few minutes every half hour or hour to stretch and walk around a bit. Working from home allows for more flexibility but you want to make sure you’re being productive and meeting your deadlines. Creating a workday schedule will vary depending on your circumstances. For instance, if you suddenly have 3 kids at home instead of in school, you may have to play around with your schedule until you figure out what works best for you.

**Sally:**

Well unfortunately I don’t have kids but I imagine a lot of our listeners and people participating today are dealing with that situation so thank you for that. Next question that I think would be important to all of us to understand is how do I avoid all the distractions of being at home?

**Jill:**

Distractions definitely can disrupt your productivity. You’ve got a spouse that’s yelling out a question from another room, kids keep popping in to see what you’re doing, the dog wants to be taken for a walk. All of this will cause you to lose your train of thought. Unless you live alone, it will be important to set ground rules. So let the other people in your home know that when you are quote-unquote at work, you are not available, unless there’s an emergency, of course. Everyone will quickly adjust to this new normal and learn to pretend that you’re away at the office.

**Sally:**

Let’s hope those tips work right? (*laughter*)

**Jill:**

Yes *(laughter)*

**Sally:**

How do I draw my own line between work and home? Sometimes keeping that balance is really difficult.

**Jill:**

It can be, especially when this is something so new to most people. Being in the right frame of mind is a big part of successfully making the transition to working from home. We are social animals and our workmates are often our friends. But you don’t have to miss out on those one-on-one interactions.

Don’t rely strictly on email. Pick up the phone and call or set up a video chat if you have questions about a project. None of us enjoy those endless email threads and those “reply all” threads. You can often resolve things more quickly with a quick chat, much like you would do if you were at the office – you know, you’d pop your head into the next cubicle or your boss’ office, right?

And just as you establish a routine to get to work in the morning, establish an end of day routine. Just like you would have to be coming home from the office. So if you’re hunkered down at the dining room table, gather everything and put it away. This signals the end of your work day. If you’re in another room, you can leave and shut the door.

My biggest advice, and I’ve found this because I also am working from home now; wear pants! While it’s easy to throw on sweatpants or stay in your PJs for the day, I’ve found that I actually get more work done and stay in work mode when I’m wearing pants with buttons or a zipper.

**Sally:**

Great advice because none of us want to see each other without pants right? (*laughter*)

**Jill:**

Exactly. (*laughter*)

**Narrator:**

Thank you to our guest, Jill Fleming, and our interviewer, Sally Mayberry. To learn more about The FriYAY Series, visit the Common Learning Portal.