

By

Morgan Mapstone

As many companies turn to fully remote work cultures, professionals have to prepare to gain work experience through remote internships, too. Here are some of my top tips for making the most of a remote internship.

Use your remote-ness as a way to meet people outside of your "bubble"

So, you only have Zoom and Slack to interact with these new strangers? Use that to your advantage! During my time at Blink, I found that Zoom and Slack allowed me to make connections with people outside of my day-to-day circles much more easily than I would have in a physical workspace.

Thanks to Zoom, there's no need to awkwardly ask a person from a different office if they want to set up a time to meet virtually, because that's what everyone is used to now. Because I was seeing co-workers in virtual meetings all the time, Zoom made me feel more comfortable reaching out to the designers with specific roles I wanted to learn more about.

Slack is also a great tool for talking about topics unrelated to work. Toward the start of your internship, request access to social Slack channels about topics you're passionate about or for groups you're a part of. Within my first week at Blink, I was participating in the #music, #interns, and #random Slack channels, along with many others, all of which helped me learn more about my fellow Blinkers on a personal level.

Figma and Mural, two remote platforms used for designing, were also great ways to do collaborative work with my co-workers in real time. Utilizing these tools not only helped me see the specific processes of designers here at Blink but also got me used to the new style of real-time collaboration that is becoming popular.

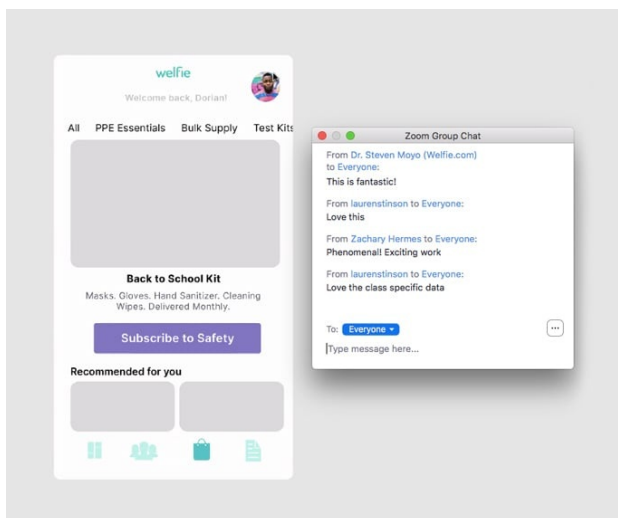
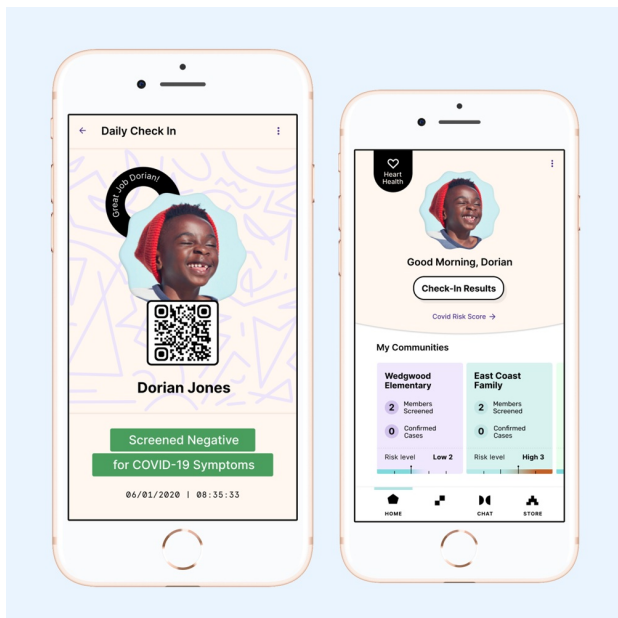


Set up a weekly one-on-one check-in with your adviser

At a busy agency such as Blink, when your work starts, man, do you get busy! And as tasks begin to pile on, it may become harder and harder to remember that you're an intern for a reason — to receive mentorship in your field. And the best way to be a mentee is to build a strong relationship with your mentor.

I ask a lot of questions, so working in an office usually means frequently visiting a co-worker at their desk to find answers. Knowing that Zoom and Slack were my only channels of asking questions, I was nervous if I'd receive that same type of frequent interaction that I knew I needed.

Luckily, at Blink, my internship already included a weekly one-on-one with my mentor, design director Ben Shown. This not only gave me a specific time to ask any general questions I had about how Blink works or what was happening in the company but also allowed Ben to share cool things he was working on that were separate from my own projects. Having these frequent meetings helped us get to know each other better and also reassured me that I had someone here at Blink who was looking out for me.

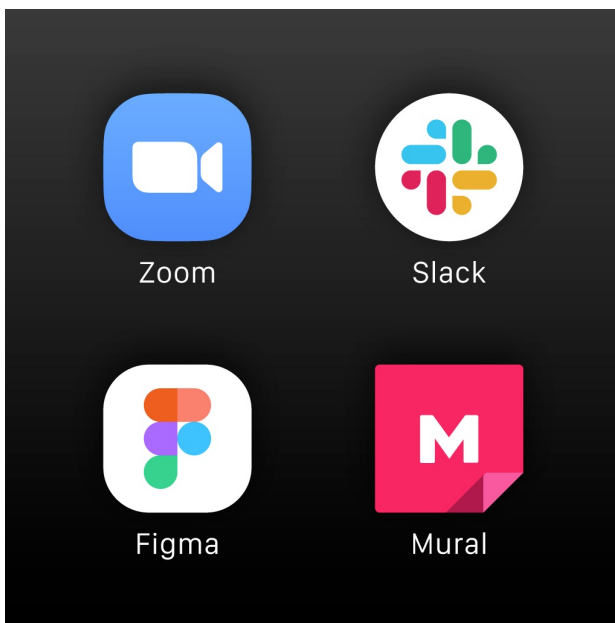


Discover your most productive work environment

Depending on your company hours, the time in which you can get your work done may be flexible. Before working from home, I always needed to complete my work before leaving the office at 5 p.m. During this internship, I found that I could mold my work hours to when I was most productive. Some days, that meant starting right at 8 a.m. and finishing earlier. Other times, it meant getting most of my work done after dinner.

Find what time of day you focus best and claim those hours for getting your heaviest work done. If those hours are outside of your company's usual work time frame, just communicate your schedule to your director and be clear on when they need to receive your finished work to avoid any misunderstandings along the way.

I also highly encourage taking the time to explore what type of work environment makes you most productive. For me, that includes sitting in my sunroom and singing along to my Spotify playlists while I get to work in Figma. Finding that personal sweet spot of time and place is what got me through most of my heavier loads of work during my time at Blink.



Meet up with co-workers in your area (if possible)

After this internship ends, I will forever miss my fellow Boston Blinkers. That is largely due to the fact that we often socialized as friends outside of the office. One of my favorite activities was meeting up in our local park to have socially distanced drinks and snacks while chatting about any topic imaginable.

If possible, make the effort to organize a safe get-together with co-workers outside of your homes to meet in person. It not only creates a stronger understanding of who everyone is a heart but also allows you to better appreciate the people you interact with every day. After all, a remote internship doesn't mean you can't build relationships with your co-workers; you just may have to find creative ways to do so.



Take breaks (yes, a *real* lunch break!)

As interns, we're sometimes ready to sacrifice our sanity to perform well in hopes of gaining crucial connections and potential job offers. While that pressure may always be there, especially in the current uncertainty of the world, you have to remember that you're human.

Some days, I struggled to find time for myself with the number of ideas and tasks on my hands. That became even harder within the confines of my home, with my laptop staring at me every time I entered my room.

The biggest thing I did for myself was setting aside time to get out of the house during the middle of my day — not just once work was done! Yes, *you can* take a break at noon to ride your bike outside. *You can* take your hour lunch to work out or grab those last-minute grocery items you forgot. Breaks aren't just about eating and then getting back to work. They're meant for you to return to your work with a fresh and restored perspective, so make time to refresh!

Lastly, if you remember anything heading into your remote internship, remember that you're not alone. This remote experience is new to everyone. Even your boss is being challenged by planning the work for their new intern! Ask as many questions as possible and face this new challenge head on. Your co-workers are there to help you! No matter what, they have your back during this new learning curve.

