

Work From Home Isn't Going Away

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The latest data revealed that unlike the productivity seen during the pandemic, people working remotely tend to work fewer hours. (DANIEL ACKER/BLOOMBERG)

The number of American workers who do their jobs from home remained steady last year, according to new data released Thursday.

About 35% of employed Americans spent their work days at home last year, according to the [latest American Time Use Survey](#), released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics on Thursday. That's fairly consistent with the 34% who reported working from home in 2022, yet still above the prepandemic average of 24% reported in 2019.

Conversely, 73% of employed Americans reported that they worked either a hybrid schedule or worked on-site full time last year.

Yet the latest data revealed that unlike the robust remote productivity seen during the pandemic, people working remotely tend to work fewer hours. On the days that Americans worked remotely last year, on average, they reported clocking in for about 5.1 hours compared with those who commuted into their workplace, who reported they worked 7.9 hours, on average.

This comes even as remote and hybrid jobs are less plentiful than they were during the Covid-19 pandemic. LinkedIn reported earlier this year that on-site job postings are far more common following

the official end of the Covid-19 pandemic—particularly among entry-level roles. Remote and hybrid roles accounted for only 12.8% of entry-level job postings on LinkedIn, for example, during the first two months of 2024.

Yet some remote work may be a good thing, for both workers and employers. Recent [academic research](#) that analyzed the working situations of employed people across 34 countries, including the U.S., found that a hybrid work schedule tends to be more beneficial than being in the office full time. The study found that those participating in hybrid work typically had better job satisfaction and lower quit rates, all while maintaining their productivity and performance.

Last year, there was little difference in the number of women versus men who worked from home, though the data continued to show that remote work was more prevalent among workers with higher levels of education.

Men, however, do tend to work longer days than women—36 minutes more, on average. The Bureau noted that the longer work day likely reflects the fact that more women work part-time and take on more of the household and caregiving responsibilities.

Women spent an average of 2.7 hours a day on household activities such as cleaning, cooking, lawn care, or household management last year. That's compared with the average of 2.1 hours that men spent on those same activities.

Beyond productivity concerns, the higher number of Americans working from home is shifting trends outside the workplace, including housing demands and transportation habits. [ADP recently analyzed large employers](#) and found that the share of Americans who were commuting long-distance between metros rose to 31% as of June 2023, compared with just 23% who were doing so in February 2020.

This could continue to put pressure on office real estate in major cities, while also driving demand for housing in suburban and rural areas. Since the first quarter of 2019, there's been a more than 2% drop in office occupancy nationwide, according to a recent RSM US analysis of [CoStar](#) data as of the first quarter 2024. And the decline has been higher, and more concentrated, in major cities such as San Francisco, Seattle, and New York.

The commercial real estate market didn't implode last year, but [RSM US reports](#) that there is still nearly \$650 billion of CRE debt that is set to mature in 2024—a situation that bears close monitoring given the persistent work from home trends.