

Sekisui House Human Life R&D Institute Conducts Special Survey on How to Stay Home in Japan

- Stress levels increased by 60% due to people refraining from going out. Women were more stressed than men.
- 86.4% indicated that they would like to continue working from home.

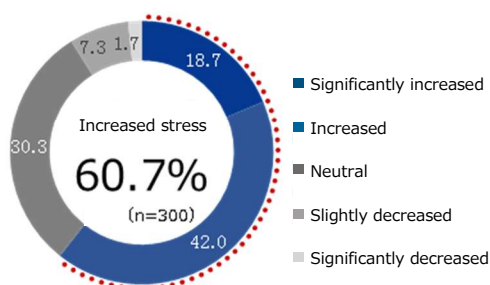
Releases 5 tips for new lifestyles in the coronavirus era

In May 2020, as the outbreak of the new coronavirus spread and people were refraining from going out, Sekisui House, Ltd.'s Human Life R&D Institute conducted a special survey on how time was spent at home. Based on the results from the survey, the Human Life R&D Institute compiled recommendations for a new lifestyle, called "5 tips to make staying at home happy."

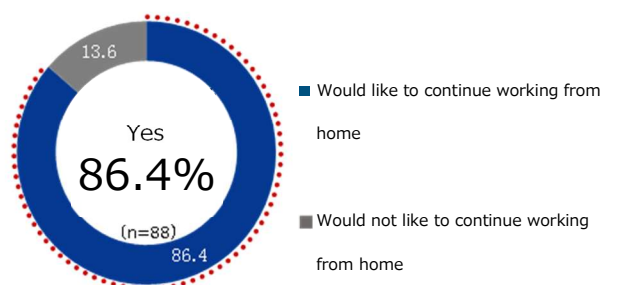
Summary of survey on how to stay home

- The total percentage of people who had increased stress due to more time spent at home was 60.7%. Women were more stressed than men (Male: 51.3%; Female: 70.0%)
- Of those currently working from home, 86.4% said they would like to continue working from home
- Benefits of working from home were having more time (50.0%), increased communication with family (39.8%), and so on

Stress due to more time spent at home
(All respondents)



Would like to continue working from home
(Currently working from home)



Due to the spread of the novel coronavirus, telecommuting and remote work have increased, and the overwhelming increase in time spent with family members at home has led to a great deal of interest in how to stay home. The Human Life R&D Institute conducted a survey on households throughout

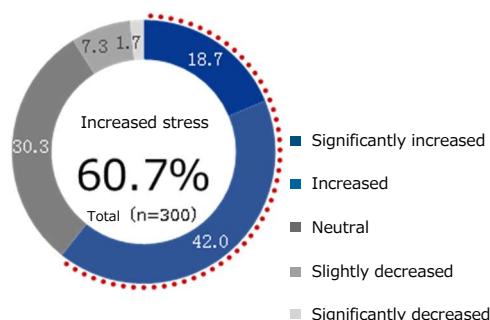
Japan to explore the reality of lifestyle changes that are occurring today. They also clarified new issues and concerns people are facing. In response to the rapid lifestyle changes, the R&D Institute has created 5 tips to make staying at home happy that summarize how to live happily at home while adjusting well to these changes.

Special Survey: How to Stay Home

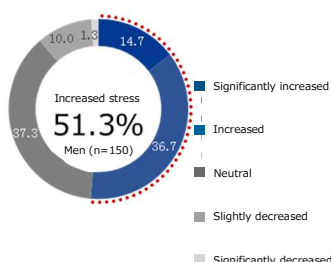
- Stress at home was rising more for women. When working from home, the potential challenge is an increase in the burden of household chores for women.

Due to the increased time spent at home, the total number of people who had increased stress was 60.7%: 51.3% for men and 70.0% for women. About half (47.0%) of families had either the husband or the wife working from home, and when asked about what was contributing to their dissatisfaction with the increased time at home, those working from home who answered the survey (29.3%; 88 people surveyed) said a lack of exercise (37.5%), increased household expenses (22.7%), and increased household chores (20.5%). Regarding the increase in the amount of household chores especially, more women (39.1%) than men (13.8%) felt that the burden of household chores had increased*, and this tended to be a cause of stress.

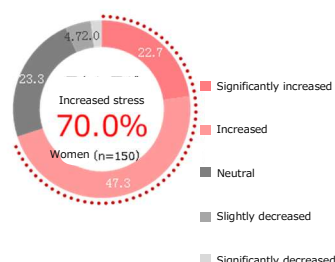
Stress due to more time spent at home
(All respondents)



Stress due to more time spent at home (Men)



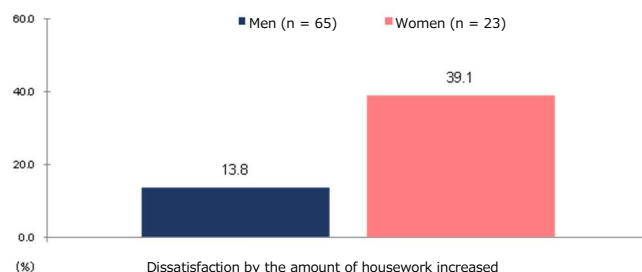
Stress due to more time spent at home (Women)



What is contributing to your dissatisfaction with the increased time at home?
(Currently working from home; n = 88)

#1	Lack of exercise (37.5%)
#2	Increased stress at home (23.9%)
#3	Increased household expenses (22.7%)
#4	Increased household chores (20.5%) *
#5	Decreased personal time (19.3%)

Dissatisfaction with increased hours at home by gender
by the amount of housework increased



- More than 80% would like to continue working from home. Benefits are having more time in general and having more time to spend with family.

Of the 88 people surveyed who were working from home at the time of the survey, 86.4% said that they would like to continue working from home. With regard to the benefits of the increased time at home, 50.0% cited having more time, 45.5% said that there was no need to worry about commuting

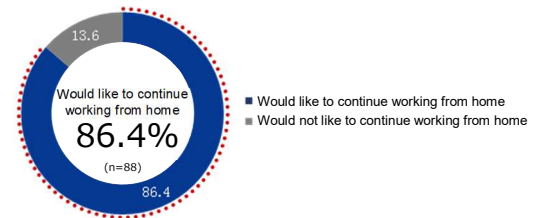
time, and 39.8% said that communication with their family had increased. Additionally, 39.8% said that they could spend more time talking with their children. It seems that people felt the benefits of working from home due to the overall increase in time and the increased communication with their families. Although there are challenges when working from home, many people recognized the positive benefits.

Benefits of working from home (Currently working from home; n = 88)

#1	Having more time (50.0%)
#2	No need to worry about commuting time (45.5%)
#3	Communication with family has increased (39.8%)
#4	I can spend more time talking with my children (39.8%)
#5	Takes less time to get ready for work (37.5%)

Intention to continue working from home

(Currently working from home)



Survey Summary

Survey timing : May 2020 Method : Online survey

Target : 300 adults aged 20-49 who had children under the age of 12 (Male: 150, Female: 150)

New lifestyle recommendations: 5 tips to make staying at home happy

Sekisui House Human Life R&D Institute, which researches houses where happiness grows the longer you live there, has created 5 tips to make staying at home happy that summarize how to live happily at home while adjusting well to rapid lifestyle changes.

The 5 tips to make staying at home happy

1. Reduce the burden of housework on women: the key phrase is “coexistence and balance”
2. Use space creatively to set up an office area at home easily
3. Use greenery to reduce stress from being unable to go out freely
4. Create your own space the simplest way possible
5. Equip your house with multiple learning areas for children’s home-based learning



Editorial supervision by Yumiko Kawasaki,
Chief Manager, Human Life R&D Institute, Sekisui House, Ltd.

Joined the company in 1987. With her 12 years of experience of living overseas until high school and her child-rearing experience, she was involved in research and development in fields closely related to daily life, such as child-related design, life with pets, storage, food space, and universal design. She has been in her current position since August 2018. She is a licensed architect.
The Human Life R&D Institute researches houses where happiness grows the longer you live there.

1. Reduce the burden of housework on women: the key phrase is “coexistence and balance”

- See housework not as an obligation, but as something you do “for a change of mood,” and something that the whole family participates in as a fun activity
- Don’t try too hard. Utilize your dishwasher and cleaning robots so that you can do housework while doing other things

In order to maintain good communication with family while working from home, it is important to focus on the key phrase “coexistence and balance.” The idea is to be aware that family members coexist while doing their own thing, and to balance paid work and housework.

From this survey, it seems that women are the ones who feel the burden of household chores the most, but as a means of assuaging such feelings, trying to be aware of enjoyment is the key. This is difficult when you think that housework is an obligation, but if you change the way you think, to see housework as a refreshing means of changing your mood from work and study, you can enjoy doing it and add variety to your daily schedule. For families where both parents have been busy working, now is the time to involve children in helping around the house, since families are spending more time together. It is a good opportunity to change the house rules. See it as “housework for everyone” that the whole family participates in as a fun activity. Housework also offers an opportunity to feel the happiness that comes from contributing to one’s family. In the survey, 25.3% (one in four) said that their happiness level had increased while spending more time at home during this time of refraining from going out, and 80.3% of those who said their happiness level had increased said that communication with their spouse had increased. People who have a lot of communication with their families tend to have a higher level of happiness, and connection with family seems to be a factor that increases happiness. In order for family members to be involved with housework, a good idea would be to make sure everyone in the family can see where the cooking and cleaning utensils are. It is also important not to try too hard. Balance paid work and housework by utilizing a dishwasher and a cleaning robot so that you can do housework while doing other things.

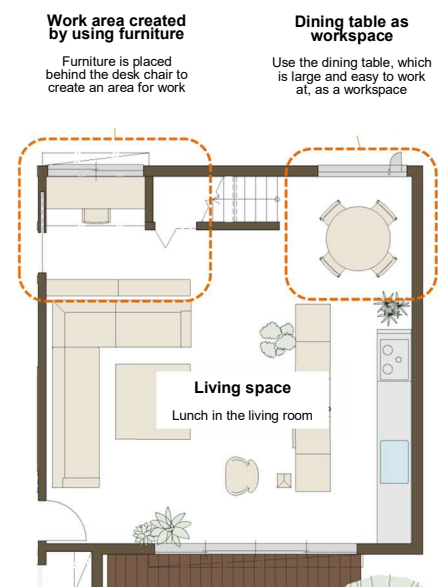
2 . Use space creatively to set up an office area at home easily

- Change the layout to separate the dining area from the living room/kitchen area. Set up a work area in the living room by creating a separate space using furniture
- Reduce the frustration of online meetings by creating a family timetable. Use a tidying-up box to separate work life from home life

The survey found that of the 270 people who had a living room in their home, most people (87.4%) spent much of their time in the living room while at home, and 58.3% worked in the living room. To create an office in a limited space, make good use of furniture and create an area for work. For example, if you use furniture such as bookshelves to create partitions, you can create an environment that makes it easy to focus even if other family members are in the same room. Also, try not to be bound by convention: be bold and move the dining table. The dining room is usually next to the kitchen, but use the dining table, which is large and easy to work at, as a workspace, and use the living room and kitchen as a living space.

To reduce the frustration of noise during video meetings, create a daily timetable and share it with the family. By sharing a schedule and asking family members to be quiet during certain times of the day, everyone can be mindful of each other and reduce everyone's stress.

In order to separate work life from home life, using a tidying-up box where you can put away your laptop and work documents is recommended. If you are using the dining table for work, you can put your laptop and documents in that box at lunchtime and/or dinner time, and you will be able to switch smoothly from work to break time or the end of the work day. Remember, important documents are safer in locked storage. Ideally, if you can set aside a separate room for online meetings, even if it is small, it will be easier not only for parents who work at home, but also for their children when they take online lessons or participate in remote classes.



3 . Use greenery to reduce stress from being unable to go out freely

- Use air plants, houseplants, and artificial plants for an outdoors feeling in your home

According to the survey results, being unable to go out freely scored 65.6% as a cause of stress. One good idea is to use greenery to feel a little of the outdoors inside the house. A house is changed when air plants or house plants are incorporated, and such plants do not require a lot of work. A Slow-Living study at Sekisui House* showed that there is a healing effect when green or soil enters someone's field of view. It is better to use real plants, but if taking care of them is difficult, decorate your home with artificial plants. If you install artificial grass in the hallway and on the balcony, you can feel the different texture and create a quick, refreshing change of mood.

Exercising at home is also recommended. Moving the body leads to stress relief both mentally and physically. If you use online yoga classes, you can even do serious exercise. When you do, try to find a space to exercise while watching the classes on your TV.



* Slow-Living research:

Joint research with Osaka City University School of Medicine (2010)

4. Create your own space the simplest way possible

- Transform the kitchen, the area in front of the bathroom vanity, or the hallway into your own space by simply creating a place to sit down

The survey results showed that 34.0% of respondents said they had no personal space in their current homes. People tend to think, “if only I had a larger house” or “I wish I had my own room,” but there is actually a simpler way of creating personal space. It is about creating a place to sit down. Just as some people feel comfortable in the restroom, people tend to feel like they have their own space if they have a place to sit. For example, a kitchen, a washroom, or a hallway is usually difficult to regard as your own space, but if you put a small chair or bench there, you may unexpectedly find that it does feel like your own space. In addition to chairs, we also recommend trying to be creative by, for example, bringing in cushions and books. If you create your own space to sit on balconies or decks, you can feel a comfort that is unique to the outdoors.



5. Equip your house with multiple learning areas for children's home-based learning

- Have a tidying-up box and a cleaning tool so children can enjoy taking care of their learning space
- Standing while studying is OK! This learning style is recommended for improving concentration
- Lighting is the most important part of the learning environment. Portable desk lamps are useful

Many people may be worried about their children's home learning environment due to the continued closure of schools. Some families set aside a private room for online learning, but we also recommend not fixing a set place to study, but instead creating an environment comprising multiple study spaces so children can study wherever they like in the house. One good idea is to help your children enjoy managing their study space after they finish studying by preparing a special tidying-up box and a small cleaning tool to clean the eraser crumbs. Meanwhile, we should get rid of the fixed concept of sitting down to study. If you create a place where your children can stand up to study, you will be surprised to see the effects in terms of their ability to concentrate and you can expect to see good progress in their learning. There is also data that shows people are less tired from standing during short work tasks. In addition, lighting is the most important part of children's learning environment. There is even a study that shows that memory improves when people can see text brightly and clearly, so purchasing a portable desk lamp makes it convenient to study in various places around the house. In fact, this idea of using multiple places for learning can also apply to spaces for working at home. Having multiple workspaces frees you from the tendency to get tired from being too focused, which is common when working at home.

