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# The Definitive Guide to Working from Home

How to stay productive and engaged away from the office



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A person is shown from the side, sitting at a desk and working on a laptop. The laptop screen displays a video call with two participants: a man in a suit and a woman in a white top. The person is holding a yellow folder. The background is a blurred office setting with a window.

# Introduction

**Remote working is nothing new. As organizations realize the importance of remote work to continue business operations, keep employees happy, and stay competitive, the rate of working from home has skyrocketed. In fact, 64 percent of today's professionals say they can work anywhere and that remote work policies are common (Gartner).**

As more of us enjoy the benefits of working from home, including a better work-life balance, increased efficiency (yes, really), and virtual meetings in the comfort of our slippers, there are some tips and tricks you can follow to make it all work.

Whether you're new to remote working or just want to brush up on the basics, here's what you need to know.



# 1. Establish a dedicated workspace

To be productive from home, you'll need to create an area dedicated for you to work. With the right workspace, you can put yourself into a productive, energized mindset that keeps you motivated throughout the day. For peak productivity, it's important to have a comfortable working area with everything you need for the job at hand. Here are a few tips to make that happen:



## Invest in a desk

If you plan to work from home more than a day or two a week, consider investing in a desk. If that's not feasible, you can easily turn the kitchen or dining room table into a makeshift desk. You're going to spend a lot of your day here, so make sure it offers plenty of breathing space. To create a healthy work routine when at home, it really helps to build a place your brain recognizes as somewhere work gets done.



## Don't skimp on the chair

Picking a desk chair is like choosing a mattress. It's not a decision to be taken lightly. For a chair that's going to support you for years to come, look for one that is fully adjustable and ergonomic.

# 1. Establish a dedicated workspace



## Prioritize natural light

Having a desk by a window doesn't just give you a nice view; it ensures you get plenty of natural light. It might not sound too important, but exposure to natural light has been linked to better workplace performance, as well as improved sleep and mood. Time to fling open those curtains!



## Buy a lamp

With natural light comes natural darkness, making a desk lamp an essential part of your home office kit. Pick a bulb that offers enough brightness to see you through to the end of the work day, without being too glaring. After all, creating an attractive office ambience is a great way to keep you interested in your workspace.



## Make it personal

Just as you might have personal photos, plants, or supplies on your office desk, consider these personal touches at home, too. Again, it's all about creating a space where you feel comfortable and productive.

## 2. Make sure you can access your files from anywhere

Uploading documents to the cloud makes it super easy to collaborate. With everything in one centralized location, your team members can easily find, edit, and add to your ideas.

Working from home means you can't blame old technology or errant co-workers for any lost data. Instead, the responsibility for missing documents or corrupted files lies directly with you. Gulp! And to be as efficient as you would be at the office, you should be able to access all your important documents, tools and projects just as easily at home as you would at your regular desk. One smart way to keep your data safe is to use the cloud.



## 2. Make sure you can access your files from anywhere

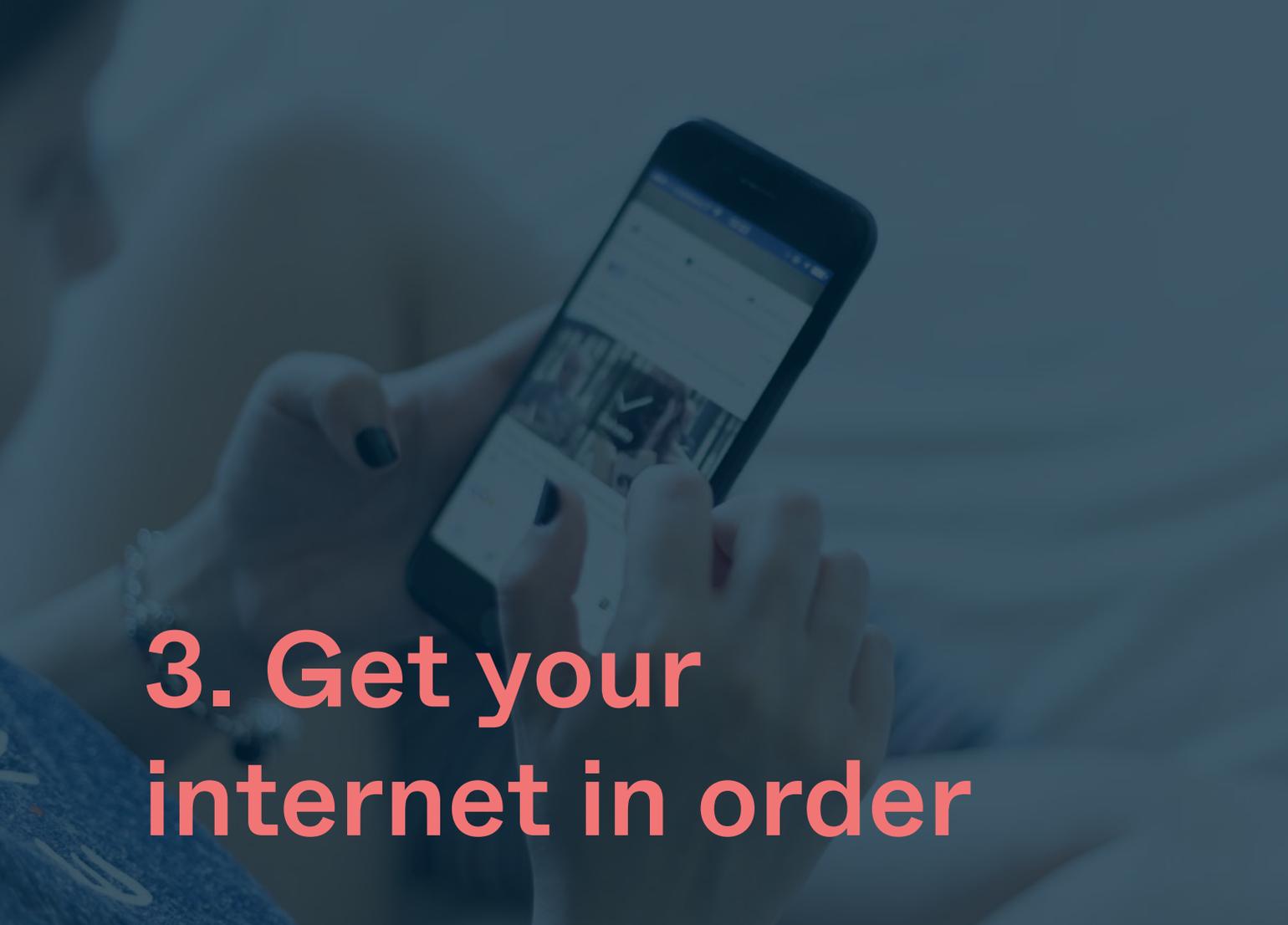
### Keeps everything safe

Broken computers and missing files are a home worker's worst nightmare. So to avoid any unnecessary stress, make use of the cloud. By uploading all of your important work – and even the not-so-important stuff – onto an online cloud storage platform, you can keep it safe and organized, making working from home easier for you and your team members.

It is important to make sure that your cloud storage platform meets the requirements and guidelines of your organization. If you are unsure of what systems or solutions to use, check with your IT group and they can help guide you.

### Makes collaboration a breeze

Uploading documents to the cloud makes it super easy to collaborate. With everything in one centralized location, your team members can easily find, edit and add to your ideas. Cloud platforms like Microsoft OneDrive, Google Drive, and Dropbox are great for this type of work. They're quick, easy to navigate, and largely free to use.



# 3. Get your internet in order

**A solid internet connection is a key part of making remote work, well, work. Without it, you could experience choppy video, poor audio quality, and even dropped calls. So how can you make sure your network is up to the task?**

## **Check your bandwidth**

Bandwidth is the maximum rate, or speed, that data can transfer across a network. Different things can affect bandwidth such as the types of applications you are running and the number of devices on the network, and you'll want to choose an internet package from your service provider with enough bandwidth for virtual meetings. To check your current bandwidth and the amount you'll need, you can search for free online speed tests and calculators such as Speedtest, FAST.com, or speed checkers with your Internet Service Provider (ISP).

## 3. Get your internet in order

### Close bandwidth-intensive applications you're not using

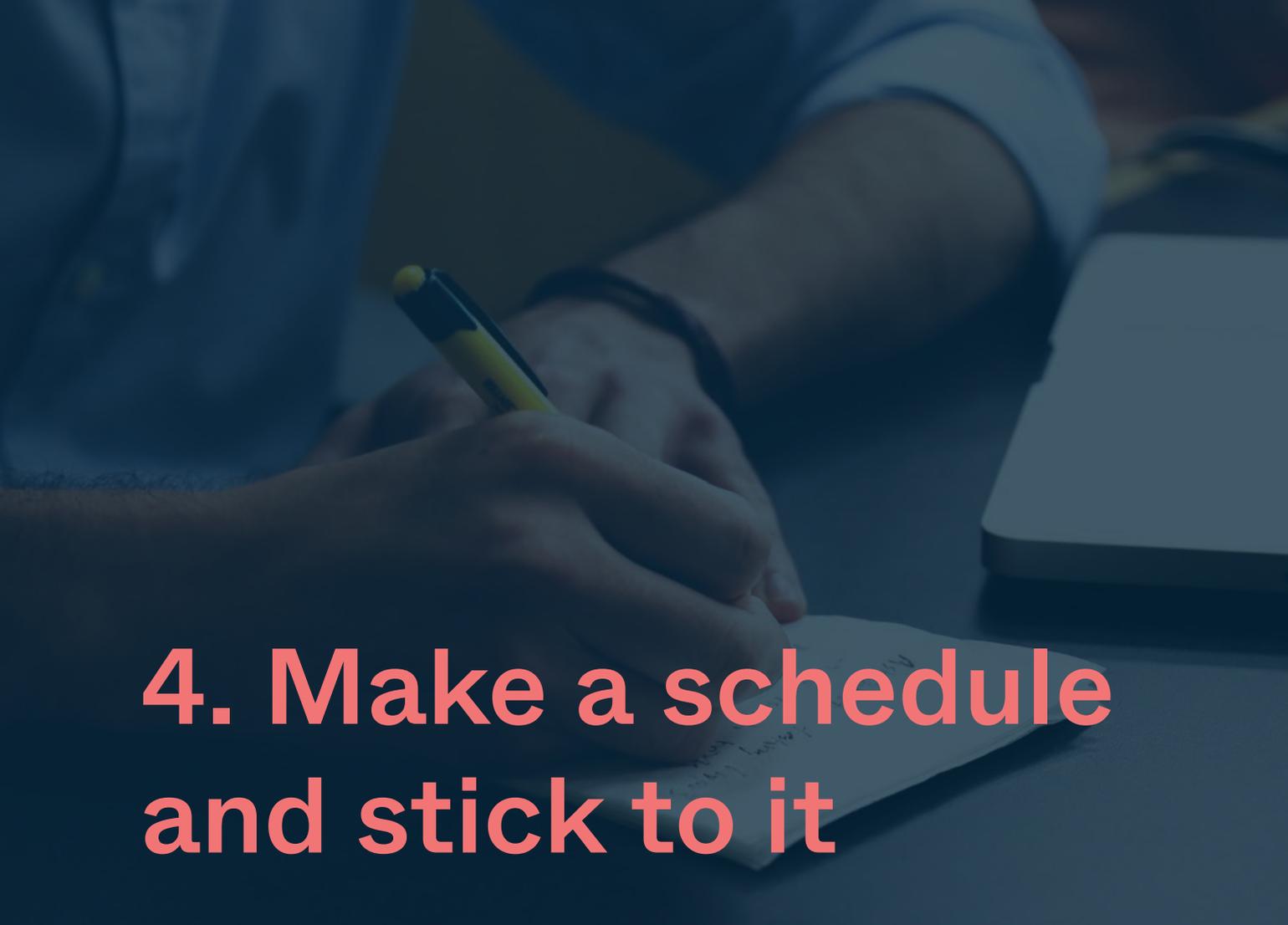
To get the best audio and video quality on your video meetings, consider closing other bandwidth hogs like streaming services (YouTube, Spotify, Netflix, etc.), cloud file sharing apps (OneDrive, Google Drive, Dropbox), social media apps, and video games.

### Limit the number of devices connected to the network

The more laptops, tablets, and smartphones using the internet, the slower the speed will be across your network. Keep this in mind when kids come home from school... The moment they fire up the video games or hop on social media, you'll likely see a drop in performance for your bandwidth-intensive work apps like video conferencing.

### Try a hard-wired connection

If you're experiencing call quality issues, try plugging in an ethernet cable instead of using WiFi. A hard-wired connection will provide a much more consistent, high-quality experience than a wireless connection.

A person is shown from the chest down, wearing a light blue shirt, writing in a notebook with a yellow highlighter. The background is a blurred office setting with a laptop and other papers. The text '4. Make a schedule and stick to it' is overlaid in a large, bold, orange font.

## 4. Make a schedule and stick to it

Planning is the key to success when working from home. From creating a weekly list of objectives to ticking off your daily to-do list, there's no such thing as too much structure when it comes to getting things done as a telecommuter. Just as you would in the office, make a game plan, be flexible when needed, and execute.

### Create a weekly schedule on Monday morning

A weekly schedule can help you plan tasks around your work environment, as well as stay on track with deadlines and meetings. If you are a partial telecommuter, consider planning your schedule around the days you'll be in the office. For instance, tasks that require deep thinking and concentration may be better suited for telecommuting days, while more free-flowing, collaborative projects and brainstorming are great for office days.

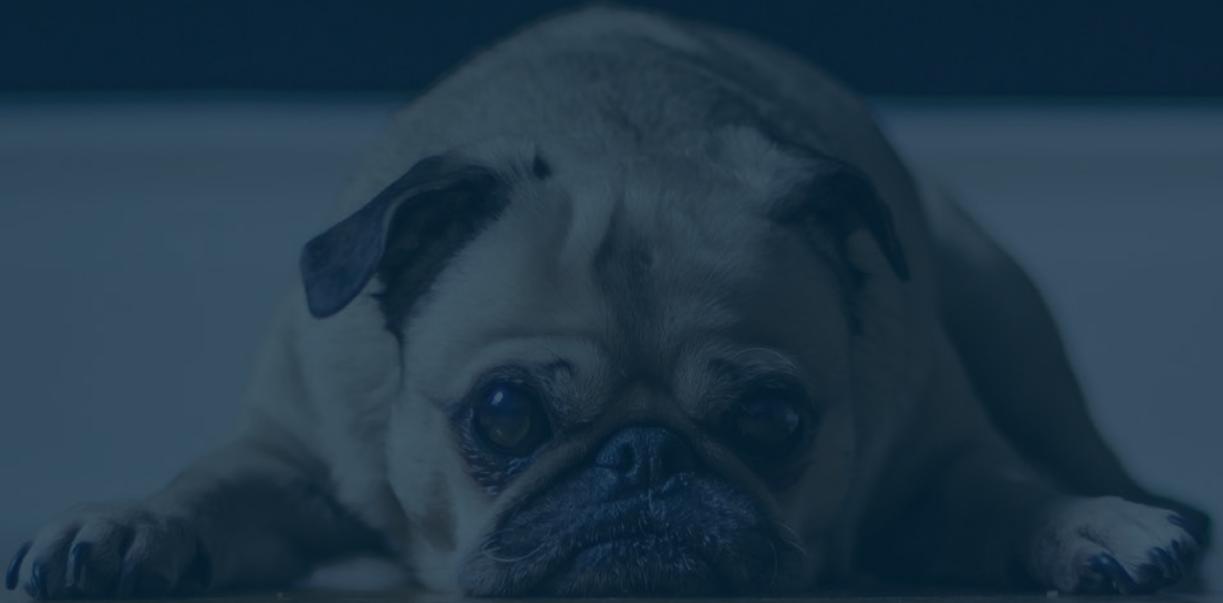
## 4. Make a schedule and stick to it

### Make to-do lists

Make daily to-do lists It might seem obvious, but to-do lists really can help you get things done. And not just because you feel guilty at not ticking off any tasks. According to a recent study by professors at Baumeister and Masicampo from Wake Forest University, simply making a plan to complete pressing tasks can free us from the anxiety that surrounds them. As a result, we're more likely to actually complete them.

### Be flexible

When scheduling work, remember that not everything will go as planned – an urgent email might land in your inbox, or the doorbell might ring at just the wrong moment. Always schedule more time to account for these unexpected interruptions, and be prepared to jump straight back into work after your holdup.



## 5. Embrace distractions

Working from home introduces a host of distractions and may put your willpower to the test. To give yourself the best chance of success, try your best to stick to the schedule we talked about earlier. That being said, distractions can sometimes be a welcome break in your day, and here are some tips for handling some of the most common distractions.

### When your kids are at home

Children may not understand the boundaries when mommy or daddy need to work, popping in and out of your work space throughout the day. Schedule time with them at lunch, or when they come home from school, so they respect your need to work at other times.

## 5. Embrace distractions

### When the fridge calls your name... again...

We've all been there. When you finish lunch #1 at 10:45 and are already planning for lunch #2, the fridge can easily lure you away from your work. To avoid packing on the "Telecommuting Twelve" pounds, create some boundaries. For instance, perhaps you treat fridge visits as a reward after completing a long task, or you position your workspace as far from the kitchen as possible.

### When your dog gives you "that look"

Why not give in? Short walks during the day can help improve moods, overcome lethargy, and even reduce hunger pangs, according to one study in the International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity. Just be sure to get back to work after a quick loop around the block.

### When the laundry or dishes are overflowing

Similarly, tackling chores around the house can provide needed breaks during the day that recharge you for more mentally-demanding tasks. Stuck on a problem or feel yourself dragging? By ticking off a small task on your chore list, you can build some productive momentum that translates into your work tasks.

### Say hi to the neighbors

Neighbors working from home, just like you? It's likely that they will embrace you joining their "work from home" community in a different way. Take a minute to step outside, enjoy the sunshine and engage in a social conversation with them. Staying connected with those around you will help combat feelings of loneliness or isolation that can sometimes come with working from home. So enjoy it without letting it dominate the day.



## 6. Maintain strong relationships using video

Video meetings are a remote worker's best friend. When your team is distributed, video can help boost collaboration and speed decision-making so you don't miss a beat. Just because you're not in the same physical location as coworkers doesn't mean you have to sacrifice productivity or relationships; video meetings are the bridge between teams and businesses, and can supercharge the way you work. In fact, you may even discover that virtual meetings can be better than in-person meetings...

### Boost collaboration

When in-person meetings are not possible, virtual meetings can bring you face-to-face with others and help you to strengthen relationships with colleagues. With HD video, great audio quality, and other tools like chat, screen sharing, live streaming, and recording, you can experience all the benefits for an in-person meeting from the comfort of your own home.

## 6. Maintain strong relationships using video

### Reduce email clutter

Tired of that endless email thread? Consider hopping on a quick video call. When you get everyone into a video meeting, you can talk through projects and questions in real-time and come to decisions much more quickly. Sayonara, cluttered inbox!

### Stay connected and engaged

For many people, working from home can be lonely. Without the day-to-day water cooler conversations and coffee breaks, it's easy to feel isolated. Video is a great way to stay connected with your coworkers and to bring the office experience with you anywhere. Consider scheduling virtual happy hours or lunch dates to catch up on the latest gossip, or simply leave a virtual window open on your desktop so you can talk to colleagues throughout the day.



## 7. Remember your meeting manners

While the rules when working from home may differ a bit, remember that a meeting is still a meeting. You still have a job to do, and by keeping a few guidelines in mind, you can keep your meetings productive and effective. Nervous about being on video? Just remember that a virtual meeting is no different than an in-person meeting, others are less concerned about your hair and your background than you are, and once you get a few meetings under your belt, you'll be a video rockstar in no time.

### Set yourself up for success

First, make sure that you are visible and that you are framed properly. Avoid backlighting from windows or lamps (no one wants to look like they're in a witness protection program) and instead, position yourself with lighting on your face. Adjust your camera or laptop so that your face is framed well within the view, or, use a meeting service like Pexip that automatically frames your face with no adjustments required.

# 7. Remember your meeting manners

## Test your technology

To avoid the last-minute scramble when joining a meeting, make sure everything works a minute or so before the call starts. Is your laptop camera turned on? Does the microphone register your voice? Is your volume turned up?

## Turn off self-view

Once you're in the meeting, consider hiding the self-view window. Many find it distracting to look at themselves during a meeting, and turning off this view can help you focus on others and the conversation at hand.

## Mute when not speaking

In larger meetings, consider muting your microphone to avoid distracting background noise on the call.

## Be present

While it may seem obvious, remember that others can see you during the meeting. So while it may be tempting to check your email or respond to a text, fight the urge to multitask and stay engaged in the conversation.

## Business on the top

Comfy on the bottom. When working from home, embrace the beauty of slippers, gym shorts, yoga pants, sweatpants... whatever floats your boat. It's expected. But when it comes to what's on camera, consider showing a more professional image just as you would in the office.

# Want to learn more about video conferencing and how it can make your life easier?

Pexip simplifies complex video conferencing to empower teams to meet, regardless of location or technology. Our scalable, cloud-native platform enables high-quality video meetings, interoperability with Microsoft and Google solutions, and video system device registration. Customers can deploy Pexip on their own privately-hosted servers, in their own cloud subscription of choice (Azure, Google Cloud or AWS), as a hybrid, or as a service. With a diverse set of APIs, Pexip can be customized to fit customers' unique needs. The solution is sold through 300 channel partners in 75 countries and used in more than 190 countries.

To learn more about how Pexip can help your teams experience the benefits of working from home, please visit [www.pexip.com](http://www.pexip.com).

**Simple, reliable video meetings**  
**Join from any device or browser**  
**Schedule meetings in one click**