



PRESS RELEASE

Workers want more flexibility from their employers after COVID

Survey of employed adults in 29 countries for the World Economic Forum finds one in four now working from home more often than before the pandemic; preference is for working remotely half of the time after it is over

New York, NY, July 15, 2021 — A new Ipsos survey in partnership with the World Economic Forum finds an average of 23% employed adults across 29 countries reporting they are now working from home more often than they were before the COVID-19 pandemic. The proportion of adults who are working from home more frequently is greater than one-third among those surveyed in Peru, Singapore, India, and Argentina.

The online survey conducted between May 21 and June 4 among nearly 12,500 employed adults finds that, on average across 29 countries, the proportion of those who are always, mostly, or sometimes working away from home today (39%) is 15 points higher than the proportion of those who were before the pandemic (24%). Three-quarters of those working from home at least some of the time today say they are doing so as a result of COVID-19.

The survey points to a global reconsideration of work arrangement preferences. The average number of days in a five-day week when those who are currently employed would prefer to be working from home when the pandemic is over and all restrictions have been lifted averages 2.5 across the countries surveyed—from a low of 1.9 in China, Belgium, and France to a high of 3.4 in India.

On average globally, two-thirds of all working adults surveyed say that:

- When COVID restrictions are no longer in effect, employers should be more flexible in terms of requiring employees to go to an office (66%);
- They are more productive with a flexible work schedule (65%); and
- They want flexibility in the amount of time they go into the office (64%).

These views are more prevalent among those with higher levels of education and income, women, younger adults, and parents of children under 18.

On the other hand, about one-third each say that:

- Their home is a difficult place to be productive (38%);
- They feel disengaged from their work when working from home (37%), and
- They feel more burned out by work when they do so (33%).

Parents of children under 18 are also more likely to feel this way.



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Three in ten (30%) say they would consider looking for another job given the same salary and responsibility if their employer expected them to work away from home full time. Those under the age of 35 and parents are more likely to say so.

Detailed Findings

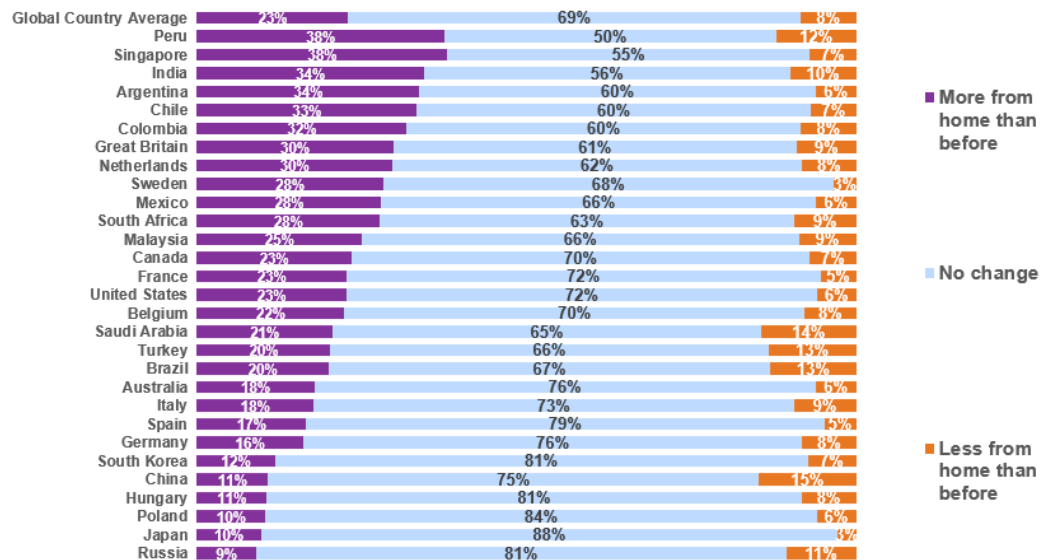
Working from home during the pandemic

On average globally, 39% say they are working from home at least sometimes (25% always or mostly and 14% sometimes). At least 50% of all employed adults surveyed throughout South America (in each of Peru, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Brazil) as well as in Singapore, South Africa, and Malaysia say so – compared to 15% in China and 21% in Russia. For comparison, only 24% say they were working from home at least sometimes before the pandemic – 15 percentage points less than say they do today.

Overall, an average of 23% of all employed adults surveyed across the 29 countries now work from home more often than they did prior to the pandemic. More than three in ten in Peru, Singapore, India, Argentina, Chile, and Colombia report working remotely more frequently, compared only about one in ten in Russia, Japan, Poland, Hungary, China, and South Korea.

CHANGE IN WORKING ENVIRONMENT VS. BEFORE THE PANDEMIC

Q. Which best describes how you are working now?



Among those who report working at from home now at least some of the time, majorities in all countries averaging at 76% globally say they do so as a result of COVID-19.

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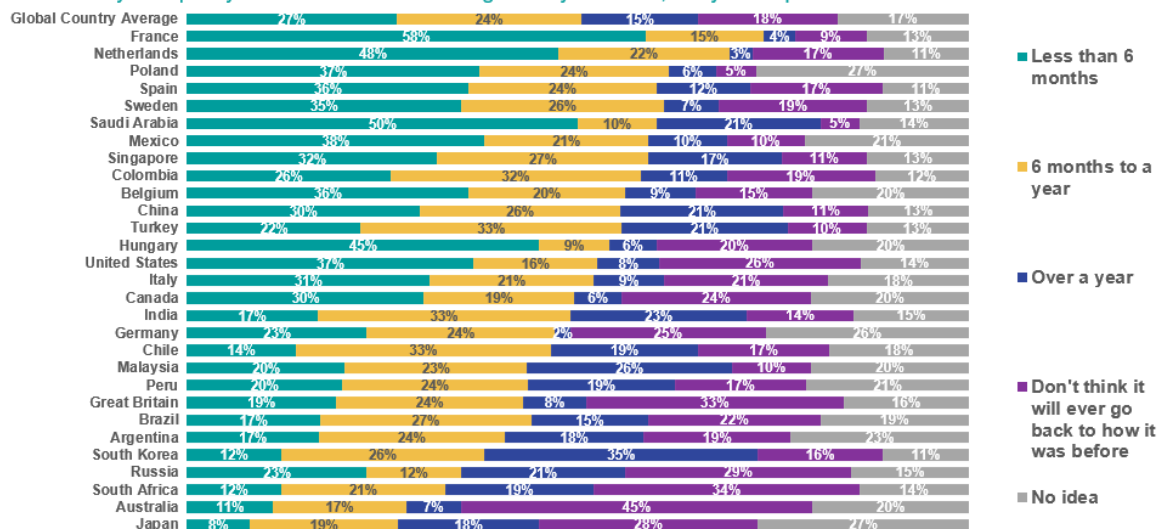
Expectations of “COVID remote workers”

Depending on where they live, those who are currently working from home because of the pandemic have vastly differing expectations as to when they will shift back to working out of their home. On average globally, 27% of “COVID remote workers” expect returning to their pre-COVID work routine within less than six months, 24% between six months and a year, 15% in over a year, 18% don’t think it will ever go back to how it was before, and 17% have no idea.

- France, Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands, and Hungary are the only countries where about half of COVID remote workers expect a prompt return to normal.
- South Korea has the largest proportion expecting it will take over a year (35%).
- Nearly half in Australia and one-third in South Africa and Great Britain do not expect to ever revert to the way things were.

PREDICTIONS FOR SHIFT BACK TO WORK OUTSIDE OF HOME

Q. When do you expect you will shift back to working out of your home, like you did prior to COVID-19?



Post-COVID Working Arrangement Preferences

On average globally, 35% say that, once the pandemic is over, they would prefer to work from home completely or more often than they used to. Nearly as many (33%) say the opposite – they would prefer to work away from home completely or less often from home than they did before the pandemic. One in ten say they would prefer to work from home as much as they used to (10%).



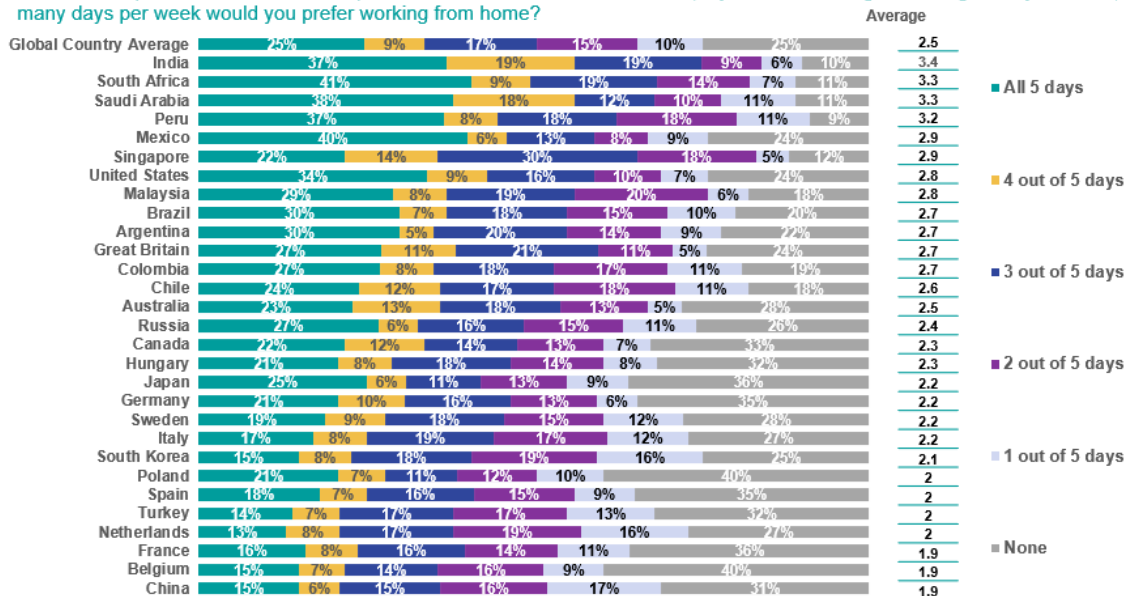
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Countries with the largest proportions saying they would prefer to work from home completely or more often than before the pandemic (all between 43% and 48%) include South Africa, Singapore, Great Britain, the United States, India, and Australia. Preference to work from completely away from home or less often from home than before the pandemic is most prevalent in Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Poland, and Turkey (all between 45% to 53%).

Globally, an average of 25% across the 29 countries say that, when the pandemic is over and all restrictions have been lifted, they would prefer to work from home every single day. It is the preference of more than one-third in South Africa, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Peru, India, and the United States. In contrast, another 25% globally on average say they would prefer not working from home any day of the week. It is the preference of more than one-third in Belgium, Poland, France, Japan, Germany, and Spain. The average preferred number of days working from home in a five-day workweek ranges from 3.4 in India to 1.9 in China, Belgium, and France.

SHIFT BACK TO WORKING OUTSIDE OF HOME

Q. When the pandemic is over and all pandemic restrictions have been lifted, if you were working on average 5 days a week, how many days per week would you prefer working from home?



On average, 30% globally agree they would consider looking for another job given the same salary and responsibility if their employer expected them to work away from home full time (12% strongly agree and 18% somewhat agree). Agreement is highest in India, Saudi Arabia, Peru, and Malaysia and more generally, among adults under the age of 35 and parents of children under 18. However, fewer than 10% in Japan, South Korea, Russia, France, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Singapore, and China *strongly* agree.



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Workers want more flexibility

On balance, workers tend to have positive perceptions about working from home and want more flexibility.

- Majorities in every country agree that when COVID restrictions are no longer in effect, employers should be more flexible in terms of requiring employees to go to an office (from 53% in Germany to 81% in India, with a global average of 66%).
- Majorities in nearly every country say they want flexibility in the amount of time they go into the office (including more than three in four in China, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, and South Korea).
- Few disagree that they are more productive with a flexible work schedule (11% on average globally vs. 65% agreeing).

In general, those with higher education, the more affluent, women, younger adults, and parents of children under 18 are more likely to express these views.

Drawbacks of working from home

When it comes to the drawbacks of working from home, on average globally:

- 52% say they miss being around their co-workers,
- 38% say their home is a difficult place to be productive,
- 37% feel disengaged from their work when working from home, and
- 33% feel more burned out by work when they do so.

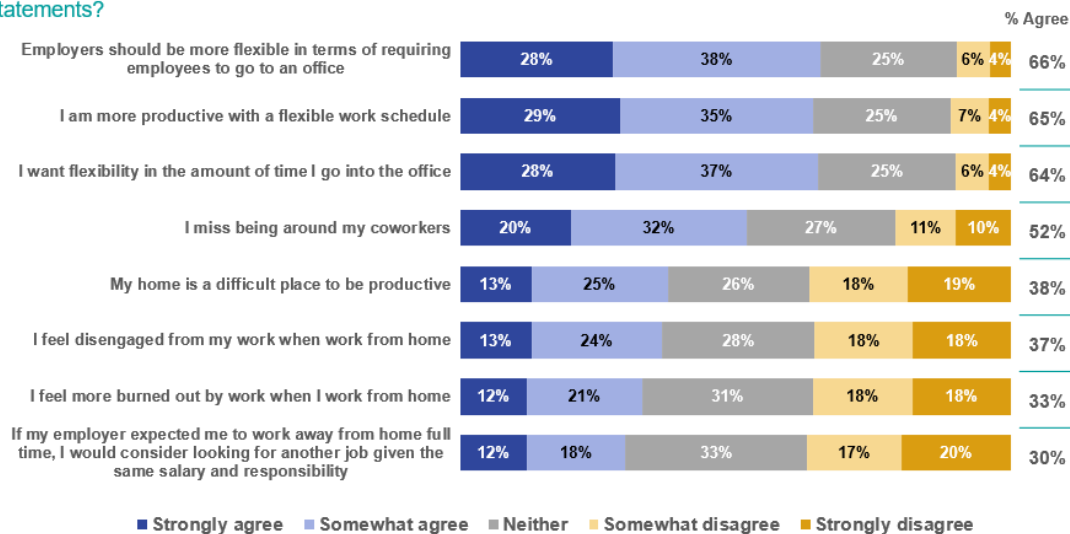
These views are more prevalent in Saudi Arabia, Turkey, India, and Malaysia and more generally, among parents of children under 18.



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OPINIONS ABOUT WORKING FROM HOME AND FLEXIBILITY

Q. Thinking of a time when the pandemic restrictions are lifted, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



About the Study

These are the results of a 29-country survey conducted by Ipsos on its Global Advisor online platform. Ipsos interviewed a total of 12,445 employed adults aged 18-74 in the United States, Canada, Malaysia, South Africa, and Turkey, age 21-74 in Singapore, and 16-74 in 23 other countries between May 21 and June 4, 2021.

The sample consists of employed individuals. The sample sizes range from n=255 in Belgium to n=809 in China (mainland) with an average of 429 per country.

The samples in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and the U.S. can be taken as representative of these countries' general adult population under the age of 75.

The samples in Brazil, Chile, China (mainland), Colombia, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, and Turkey are more urban, more educated, and/or more affluent than the general population. The survey results for these countries should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more "connected" segment of their population.

The data is weighted so that each country's sample composition best reflects the demographic profile of the adult population according to the most recent census data.

Where results do not sum to 100 or the 'difference' appears to be +/-1 more/less than the actual, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of don't know or not stated responses.



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The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of 500 accurate to +/- 4.8 percentage points. For more information on the Ipsos use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website.

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