

32 useful tricks and tips for helping people with digital skills during lockdown

11th June, 2020 by Katharinet



We've been chatting with lots of our [Network](#) Digital Champions over the past few weeks about how to provide digital skills support when you're social distancing.

Here is a quick-fire round-up of some of the top tricks and tips. We hope they help.

1. **Focus and listen.** Less visual clues mean it's easy to miss when someone's got confused or panicked by your instructions.
2. **Zoom, Facetime or Skype?** Zoom seems to be the popular choice but experiment and see what works best for your learner.
3. **Don't underestimate the telephone.** 81% of remote Digital Champions are giving their help this way.
4. **Take. It. Slowly.** Remember it can longer to learn virtually compared with face to face.
5. The top three things people want help with right now are using **video tools, online boredom busters and using email.**
6. **Talk their language.** If it's a 'pointer' rather than a Cursor or a 'button' rather than a Computer Key, let it be so.
7. Break the task down into **distinct steps**, however simple. It will help you and your learner feel like you're making progress. And progress is a wonderful thing.
8. Taking notes aids memory and understanding. Give your learner time to **write stuff down.**
9. Go easy on yourself, **this is hard.**

10. It's about **small steps, not giant leaps**. Teaching online shopping? Start with browsing a supermarket website and writing a shopping list a neighbour could use. Leave the online transaction for another time.
11. Email is great but save it for afterwards for sending links, questions, guides so you can **keep the flow, man**.
12. **Location still matters** so make sure you're both somewhere where you'll not be disturbed.
13. **Don't try to do too much** in one go. The average adult attention span is 15-20 minutes.
14. Not every detail is important when describing an online thingy. So leave some out. You just need to **get the main point across**.
15. Try and use the same browser/device as the learner so you can **see what they see**.
16. Allow time to sit back and **let your learner practice** on their own. It will help them remember what you've said.
17. **Need kit?** These guys might be able to help: [FutureDotNow](#) and [Wavelength](#).
18. **Need connectivity?** Lots of internet companies have removed data caps, and some, like [BT Basic](#), offer low cost phone and broadband packages.
19. **Create your own demo**. Some devices and programmes like Macs and Windows 10 have built-in screen recording.
20. **Use a Voice Recorder** for 'How to Do' instructions and email it as an MP4 file.
21. **Take screen shots**. You could send these separately ie via Whatsapp.
22. If the **internet's dodgy** make sure you and your learner are sitting as close to the router as possible.
23. If the **internet's still dodgy**, use the ethernet cable and/or reset, otherwise known as the classic turn on and off again approach. [Our guide](#) might help too.
24. **Make it fun**. Help them play online scrabble, take virtual tours, plan a holiday, learn the ukulele.
25. Pause a little and **listen to their fears**. What aspects of digital technology can help ease their personal concerns?
26. **You don't have to have all of the answers**. No one does. Why not refer to a digital helpline, [like AbilityNet](#) that's manned by expert tutors? 0800 048 7642.
27. **Be encouraging**, even if someone is doing it wrong, over and over, and over again. Encouragement gives hope.
28. Print a couple of our [how-to guides](#) and pop them **in the post**. We've got hundreds, literally hundreds, of them.
29. **Talk about scams**. There's some [great advice here](#). And you can report suspicious activity to the National Cyber Security Centre via report@phishing.gov.uk.
30. **Build your knowledge and skills** as an accredited Digital Champion by training online. [For free](#).
31. If your remote digital skills session turns into a chat about the weather, the neighbours or the weekly bin collection that is **more than enough** at this time.
32. **Remember, we are all learning**.

If you like this advice, we've got more:

- [Check out our guides on providing digital skills help remotely](#).
- [Use our how-to resources to help people stay well and stay connected](#)

