

# THE ARMSTRONG XPRESS

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## The TELEWORK Bunch



## Special Telework Issue

# Telework is the new normal: Armstrong employees adapt

The Armstrong Strategic Communications Office asked employees in various roles to explain how their jobs have temporarily changed because of COVID-19.



**Arya Abrego**  
Business Analyst  
for the UAS NAS  
Project

“My position requires supporting briefings and reporting to all four NASA aero centers, AFRC center management, NASA headquarters, government agencies, such as the FAA, and industry partners. In the transition to mandatory telework, I have found regular communication to be necessary. Switching our in-person chats to Microsoft Teams has been helpful to keep interaction going, not to mention you get to send the team

a smirk GIF, which gives everyone a similar sense of playfulness as being in the office. Having a way to maintain being a team in the time of a crisis gives you a sense of community.”



**Eric J. Miller**  
Fiber Optic  
Sensing System  
(FOSS) Team  
Project Manager

“Teleworking has made the team focus more on our design-related, analysis-related and software-related tasks. It’s been a small adjustment, but the team has been doing great. We meet every morning at 8 to get a quick tag-up with folks to see what everybody is doing for the day, and if there are any issues. The lab guys all work in one room, so you miss out on that day-to-day interaction. We have these FOSS units in develop-

ment, and the focus right now is getting the software up to snuff, so once we get back we will be ready for environmental testing. The software writing, the modeling for the design and analysis, the finite element analysis, structural analysis tools –the same tools we use at work, we just bring them home with us.”



**Brian Foxe**  
Emergency  
Management  
Program Manager  
and  
Continuity of  
Operations (COOP)  
Coordinator

“I have been splitting time between telework and having an on-site presence manning and operating the security posture for the center through our EOC (Emergency Operations Center). This has been a quickly evolving situation. Keeping the center personnel access list updated, and working special access requests for facilities, programs, and other personnel has taken a lot of my time especially given changes in center status. I have also been quite busy keeping

the center plugged in to various Emergency Operations Centers at Edwards, and other areas to facilitate local needs, especially those related to Edwards Air Force Base. Doc Peake and I have been in almost daily contact, it feels like we are almost joined at the hip, but not quite given social distancing!”



**Roberta Sherrard**  
CIO and Director for  
Mission Operations

“It has been over a week since most of us have been teleworking and have found a new, temporary, ‘normal.’ As a support organization, it is difficult not to be ready and able to help folks immediately and in person. It has been encouraging to see that NASA seemed to be better prepared than other agencies with an established and tested VPN network to accommodate teleworking. I know there are always glitches, but we have

been able to make the transition in a fairly quick manner, providing resources for people to continue to execute the mission. It is a testament to the hard work and focus of so many on the IT team, they are my heroes!”



**Bill Werner**  
Facility Operations  
Specialist Lead

“My primary function requires me to be on site the majority of time, so this teleworking way of doing business is a bit different for me. I do spend some time on the center; I was out there most of the weekend during the power outage. Any type of critical activities, I’m usually on-site. It was crucial we got it done (the planned power outage) when we got it done. We have several contractors who come to support to do relay testing, and other testing on the equipment, which

pretty much powers the entire center. It went extremely well. The technicians did a lot of pre-staging of equipment and gear to where we actually shortened the hours it takes to work on the equipment.”



**Kaylynn Clark**  
Librarian in the  
Research Library,  
located in Ken Iliff  
Knowledge Center

“Inherently, library work is very people focused so it is strange not have in-person interaction with library patrons. However, we are in the digital age, and that is highly reflective in the research that I assist with at AFRC. Typically, over 80 percent of monthly library requests prior to COVID-19 were placed via email. We have always felt agile to serving patrons, and maintaining a digital presence, even now. Individuals can

receive any articles they would like via direct request to me (Librarian Kaylynn Clark) by email. We also have access to NASA ebooks, and audiobooks on various topics through SATERN, and resources for all projects.”



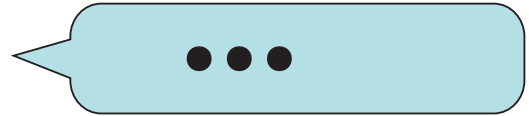
**Carmen Arevalo**  
Office of the Center  
Director Administrative  
Assistant

“For me this is a different situation, as the front office is always busy. I am very impressed with how Teams is allowing us to work and stay connected. We are very fortunate we can still go on with the mission. David is good at answering questions with ask the center director dialogues, most of the time the same day. David and Patrick have daily meetings and let us know what is going on at the center and in their personal lives.”



**Sean Clarke**  
Principal  
Investigator for  
the X-57 Maxwell

“Having an exciting project like X-57 to work on is one way to distract yourself a little bit from everything going on right now. There are a lot of us going through this right now, together, and we should work through this as a group.”



**Bob Guere**  
Hugh L. Dryden  
Aeronautical Test  
Range Operations  
Lead

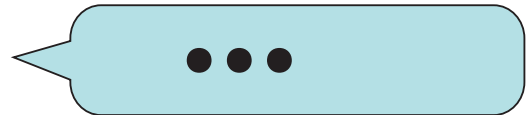
“All ground network sites need to make periodic checks. Once a week technicians look at tracking information and verify that it is pointing to the International Space Station. They check out the transmitter, antennas and receiving equipment, and go through a check list to report that Armstrong is green (ready) for support. A Soyuz launch is coming up on April 9, so we will check the system with the network on April 7 to support the spacecraft from its launch to docking with the station.”



**Allen Parker**  
Fiber Optic Sensing System (FOSS)  
Senior Research  
Engineer and  
Primary Developer

“We have had hurdles trying to regain traction in our productivity, but none we could not overcome. We have such an awesome group that has risen to the challenge of making this work. One project we have been able to continue work on effectively has been the Flight Opportunity Program (FOP). We are currently transitioning from the experiment formulation phase to the design phase. We are in the process of writing software, designing hardware and

performing analysis on those designs, all through our government computers. I really do miss the personal interaction of our team, however, I am encouraged amidst these challenging times in which we find ourselves. Allow yourselves to be encouraged in addition to being an encouragement to others.”





**Nils Larson**  
X-59 Lead Test Pilot

“I’m no stranger to working under remote conditions, having lived for some time in parts of Africa with no telephones, television, or at times, electricity. The work itself to keep X-59 going is plenty to keep anyone on the project busy throughout the mandatory telework. Obviously, I’m not out flying an airplane right now, but there’s always a lot of stuff that’s on the backburner that you can pull forward, that you can get to, to keep you occupied.”



**Patricia Ortiz**  
X-56 Project Manager

“As project manager of X-56, part of my job is to keep the program moving forward through this. Communicating as much as possible with the team, we gathered that there are still a lot of things we can do while teleworking. We were able to establish all of the work with answering responses and actions for X-56’s flight readiness review, and we’re also working documentation to prepare for our flight test campaign.”



**Monica Uribe**  
NASA EPDC  
(Engagement and Educator Professional Development Collaborative)  
Education Specialist for the California Office of OSTEM Engagement

“I provide STEM professional development to educators, and NASA STEM educational opportunities to students and their families. This information is presented face-to-face, and through webinars for educators and students, as well as through digital badging (micro-credentials). These webinars and digital badges are aligned with NASA STEM (physical science; engineering; life science; technology; Earth and space). ‘Moon to Mars,’ ‘Small Steps

Giant Leaps (SSGL)’ and ‘Commercial Crew Program (CCP)’ are some of the webinars I present in Spanish. Our team has constant communication via phone, Teams or WebEx. We are constantly creating webinars and digital badges, and at the moment, we are creating more opportunities for parents webinars in both English and Spanish.”



**Doug Wada**  
Systems Engineer for the UAS NAS Project Office

“I support the chief engineer located at Armstrong and the deputy engineer located at Langley. Our project office is geographically spread across all aeronautic research centers. To support our team we start at 6 a.m., and our project manager has always encouraged us to telework to accommodate our cross-center collaborations. Our office is used to using WebEx and teleconferences to remain in contact. When Stage 4 was implemented, our office was ready to”

switch into a full-time telework environment. I recently decided that I have come to enjoy hearing children and dogs barking in the background because that is what we are all dealing with. Two weeks ago I would have never thought of calling someone on Teams and hitting the video button, and now it’s not a big deal.

### NASA’s Flight Opportunities program

NASA’s Flight Opportunities program team members from both Armstrong and Ames are continuing their work from home offices in Arizona, California, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Washington.

“We’ve always been a geographically distributed team, accustomed to collaborating using NASA’s IT infrastructure to keep us connected,” said Program Manager John Kelly.

The team is currently preparing for incoming abstracts and proposals from industry, academia, and non-profit research institutions for flight testing on commercial suborbital vehicles through NASA’s Tech Flights solicitation. In the coming months, the team will select promising technologies with the potential to help NASA achieve its mission goals.

“In addition to the upcoming Tech Flights selections, we’re continuing to work with NASA technologists across multiple centers to identify opportunities to fly their technologies,” said Chief Technologist Stephan Ord. “And we’re also supporting principal investigators whose technologies have already been selected for future flights to prepare for those tests and maintain close coordination with our commercial flight providers.”



**John Kelly**



**Stephan Ord**

# 5 tips for successful teleworking

By Brian Eslinger

New Horizons Aeronautics Program Manger

## Establish a routine

Establish a routine and stick with it, just as you would when going to the office. Wake up at a set time each day, and go through a “get ready for work” schedule, including dressing for work and moving to your work area (dining room table, home office, or other). Maintain your regular coffee breaks, lunch break, and maybe add a walk in the middle of the day to reset.

## Set up a work environment

Prepare a work area. When you are there, you are at work, and when you leave you are not. Establish this separation at home from the beginning. Manage the same level of noise you have in the office, whether this is quiet, or filled with music. Arrange the ergonomics like you would at the office, and make sure all power cords, etc. are tucked away to avoid hazards.

## Communicate

When teleworking, you miss the organic hallway tag-ups, or impromptu meetings at AFRC. Collaboration looks different now, so it is important to be communicating with your team. Phone and email are great, and Microsoft Teams adds a video feature for face-to-face interaction and instant messaging. Remember emails can sometimes be miscommunicated, but a phone call can often clear up

confusion. A huge advantage of Armstrong is the teamwork. Social distancing can kill that advantage, don't let it: stay connected to each other.

## Stay active

The walk from your bedroom to your work area is much shorter than the walk to your car, your office and to lunch each day. Get outside at least once per day, even if it is just to walk around the block. Several gyms are offering virtual classes in the absence of opening their doors, so check online, or with your local gym.

## Set household expectations

With kids at home trying to complete virtual school, or a spouse working from the same room, demands can come from new directions. Set expectations for others in your home, let them know when you are at work and should not be interrupted. This can cause friction and hurt feelings at first, but will soon be accepted as the new normal.



# How to prevent eye strain while teleworking

Provided by Alana R. Johnson, Public Affairs Officer, NASA Headquarters

It is 20/20, the perfect year to remind ourselves of eye health and safety at work—whether at home or at the center. Here are some ways to prevent digital eye strain.

**Reposition your screen.** Position your screen at a right angle away from any direct light source. Invest in an anti-glare screen for your monitor to make work less straining on the eyes.

**Remember the 20-20-20 rule.** Every 20 minutes, you should look at an object at least 20 feet away, for at least 20 seconds.

**Don't forget to blink.** Write a note that reads “blink often,” and place this on your monitor. This note can remind you to close your eyes, and prevent the eyes from getting too dry.

**Use artificial tears.** Over-the-counter eye drops can be extremely helpful in preventing dry eye, and keeping your eyes comfortable.

**Drink water.** Adequate hydration can make a big difference, especially during the winter months, when heaters can make the air particularly dry.

**Schedule regular eye exams.** Properly fitted glasses or contacts, adjusted for astigmatism, or special computer glasses will alleviate strain.

**Get a good night's sleep.** This will help your eyes recover from daily strain.

Source: <https://yoursightmatters.com/march-is-workplace-eye-wellness-month/>

# Teleworking ergonomics

By Steven W. Black, MPH, CIH

Industrial Hygienist | Armstrong Flight Research Center

Working at home can create some ergonomic health hazards as you sit at a laptop all day. Neck, back, eye, and hand strains or soreness are just a few symptoms people may experience while teleworking. Here are some recommendations to improve the ergonomics of your home workspace. Please choose the best setup based upon what you have available.

## When an external keyboard and mouse are available.



1. Use a box, books, or other items to position the monitor at or below eye level. A slightly lower screen will help those who read with bifocals.
2. Screen should be no more than arm's length away to reduce eye strain.
3. Keep arms close to your body. Keep your hands and wrists in line with your forearms.
4. Keep the keyboard flat (Don't use the feet on the back to angle the keyboard).
5. Use a hard, flat surface to work on.
6. Use a chair with back support.
7. Reduce clutter around your workspace.

## When you only have a laptop.



1. Place a binder, or another similar object, under the laptop to slightly angle the laptop.
2. Tilt the screen back.
3. Screen should be no more than arm's length away to reduce eye strain.
4. Keep arms close to your body.
5. Use a hard, flat surface to work on.
6. Use a chair with back support.
7. Reduce clutter around your workspace.

## Chair adjustments



1. Use a chair with back support. Avoid using a stool, couch, bed, exercise ball, or the floor.
2. Stack pillows on the seat if you are sitting too low. If you have a pencil drawer in your way when you sit higher, remove the drawer so your legs have room.
3. Place a pillow halfway down the back if you need additional support or roll towels to add extra lumbar support.
4. If your keyboard, screen, and laptop are too far away, it will cause you to lean forward in your chair and put strain on your lower back, shoulders, and neck. Use the chair's back support.

## Legs and feet



1. Use a hard, flat surface to work on. A table or desk is best, as it will allow you to come closer to your work area.
2. Your legs and feet need space. Remove extra clutter and don't sit in front of a filing cabinet, dresser or the desk's drawers.
3. Feet should be flat on the floor. If they don't reach the ground, use a box or book(s) to rest your feet on them.
4. Avoid curling your legs under the chair. Legs should be close to a 90° angle.

## Additional useful tips

- Don't cradle your phone between your head and shoulder. Use your speaker phone instead or a Bluetooth earpiece.
- Don't eat where you work.
- Adjust the brightness of the screen to a comfortable setting.
- Maintain good posture.
- Switch back and forth from a sitting/ standing position. Place your workstation on a high countertop or a large box, if possible.
- Use an anti-fatigue mat if standing.
- Take Micro breaks every at least every 30 to 45 minutes.
- Do stretching exercises every 20 to 60 minutes.

## *A Message from Center Director David McBride*



Thank you for your efforts in stemming the spread of COVID-19. For those of you at home and teleworking, you are doing the right thing to break the chain of the coronavirus spread, which will help protect our families and our communities.

For those of you continuing to support the NASA mission by protecting our critical center assets, and those enabling the NASA goal of launching the Mars 2020 Perseverance rover to the surface of Mars in July, a special thank you. Wherever you are, at home, at the center, or in flight, please continue to practice what you have learned to stem the virus.

Where and when we can, we will use our expertise and skills to help the community. When you see opportunities for the Armstrong family to step up, let me know.

We are continuing our mission from home to the best of our abilities, and when the time is right, we will bring you back to the center to resume our full capabilities and research through flight. Please recognize that your safety is my top priority. I will not ask employees and contractors to perform work if I do not have the highest confidence that it is safe to do so.

Please continue to follow the health, safety, and hygiene guidelines you can find at the NASApeople website and from the CDC.

This is a difficult and challenging time for all of us – here and around the world. This is a time to learn new, and maybe better, ways of communicating and collaborating. This is a time to devise new and innovative ways to accomplish our mission of advancing technology and science through flight. Times of adversity are also times of great innovation. Let's use this time well to make the center, the agency, the nation, and the world a better place.

Stay safe and stay healthy,

David

## Coronavirus updates

Looking for updates? Access these sites for information pertaining to COVID-19.

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

### NASAPeople

<https://nasapeople.nasa.gov/coronavirus/>

### Coronavirus (COVID-19) in California

<https://covid19.ca.gov/>

### FEMA Rumor Control

<https://www.fema.gov/coronavirus-rumor-control>

### The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>

### Kern County Public Health Services Department Coronavirus Disease 2019

<https://kernpublichealth.com/2019-novel-coronavirus/>

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