

Working On the Go!

The traditional 9-5 work schedule was once the socially acceptable way of defining productivity. However, in more recent history, entrepreneurs and social organizations have changed the work environment to make more flexible and nontraditional work schedules the norm. Personally, I find that a more flexible work schedule does not limit productivity, but actually helps me to adapt to the various needs present because of the disability.

Life of an Entrepreneur

During college, my original plan was to become a physician. I've always had a love for medicine, and felt that medical school was the right path. However, the rigorous schedule during pre-med along with a full time job was far too much for me to manage physically. I found that a traditional school/work schedule was taxing on my body and did not allow me to be as fruitful as I could. Mornings have always been a challenge. To get up and ready as a wheelchair user may take an hour or longer more than the average. When you add requiring assistance to use the restroom into the mix, the stress being getting up and going before 9:00 am on a regular basis was difficult.

Overtime, I opened myself up to creative possibilities, which led me to the life of an entrepreneur. I've been blessed to work for myself now for ten years – and it's been the best choice for my personal health. Ironically, as a business owner, I work many times over 40 hours a week – but on my own schedule. Now, that doesn't mean this lifestyle has led me to be a bum who sleeps in everyday, but instead allows me to get up and going with the ebbs and flows of my body – when I feel good, I do more. When I don't, I take it slower.

Office Anywhere

One way that I'm able to balance meeting the varying needs presented by life in a wheelchair along with running a business is transitioning just about anywhere with wi-fi into a temporary office. For example, for the next few months we will have a cousin living with us as he goes through chemotherapy treatments. Each round consists of 7-8 hours of chemo each day, which makes it difficult to travel from my office in Coral Gables to the hospital each day. To adapt to the new schedule, I found that the Miami Cancer Institute has not only fairly good wi-fi connections, but multiple café style tables that my wheelchair fits underneath and of course, hot coffee! As I write this article, I'm sitting outside on the veranda, enjoying the cool air while at the same time being here for my cousin. The idea here is to be open-minded to your needs for “office space” and adapt.

Preparing for Working Outside of the Office

I always carry a backpack on the back of my wheelchair, have a pair of Beats headphones available, along with my laptop, phone charger and computer charger. I've made it a standard to require client files be saved online either

through DropBox, Google Drive, or in a project management program we use internally called Basecamp. So long as I can find a good wi-fi connection, Grants Ink's portable office is ready to go! **Another tip:** look around your physical space to see where accessible tables may be, power outlets you can connect to, as well as doors that you can easily open. I remember one time finding a great spot to work at outside of a building with a door so heavy, I had to call someone inside the building to let me in – before it started to rain!

Happy Writing!

Author: Lorinda Gonzalez resides in South Florida with her family and service dog, Remy. She was diagnosed with Spinal Muscular Atrophy at the age of three, and has used a motorized wheelchair for mobility since the age of nine. As an avid writer and reader, she has worked as a grant writer and editor since 2009. She recently participated in Bold Beauty Project where she was a model supporting the cause of showcasing women with disabilities and beautiful and sexy. Lorinda holds a Bachelor in the Arts Degree in English Writing and Rhetoric, and is currently completing a Masters of Arts Degree in Communications. She is a co-founder of NMD United, a 501c3 and on the board of multiple non-profit organizations. In her free time, Lorinda enjoys spending time with family and friends, painting, listening to music, and traveling to historical locations.