

A FREE GUIDE FROM ILANA JACQUELINE

10 Accommodations You Can Ask For in a *Remote Job* When You Have a Chronic Illness

Working from home is not an accommodation. Here's what to actually ask for — with the exact language to use.

Includes copy-and-paste request scripts

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Ten accommodations that actually fit remote and hybrid work
- The exact wording for each request
- What your employer can — and can't — ask you to prove



Ilana Jacqueline — author of *Medical Gaslighting* and *Surviving and Thriving with an Invisible Chronic Illness*

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Remote work gets sold as the accommodation. It isn't. Working from home solves your commute and maybe your dress code — it does not solve fatigue, brain fog, infusion days, pain flares, or the fact that your best hours might be 6am or 9pm and nobody asked you. A lot of chronically ill people take a remote job, burn out in eight months, and assume they failed at the easy version of work. You didn't. You just never got the adjustments that would have made the job survivable.

This is a list of ten accommodations that actually apply to remote and hybrid roles — the kind you can request without your employer needing to renovate anything. Each one comes with language you can lift and put in an email. It's for anyone working or job-hunting with a chronic illness, an invisible illness, a disability, long COVID, autoimmune disease, mental health conditions, or a body that does not run on a 9-to-5 schedule. It's also for the people who love them, and for the managers who genuinely want to keep good employees and don't know what to offer.

You do not need a diagnosis on your forehead to ask.

You need a request, in writing, that connects what your body does to what the job requires.

01

Put it in writing. Email, not a hallway conversation.

02

Name the adjustment, not your diagnosis. Be specific.

03

Keep a copy of everything you send and everything they answer.

1

A schedule built around your body and your treatment

This is the big one, and it's really three asks in a trench coat: when your day starts, how many hours it holds, and what happens when you have appointments.

Symptoms keep a schedule — it's just not your employer's. Morning stiffness, medication timing, and sleep dysfunction mean your usable hours may start later, or earlier, than the standard workday. Some people need fewer hours, or four days instead of five. And specialists, infusions, labs, physical therapy, and follow-ups are not personal days — that's maintenance on the body doing the job, and it shouldn't be coming out of your vacation.

Ask for the version you actually need. Shifted hours. A compressed week. A 30-hour schedule. Appointment time you make up rather than burn PTO on. Or all three.

ASK FOR IT LIKE THIS

"I'd like to shift my hours to 10am–6:30pm and keep flexibility for recurring medical appointments about twice a month, making up that time rather than using PTO. My total hours and availability during team core hours won't change."

2 Camera-optional meetings

Being on video is a performance. It costs energy you need for the actual work, and it turns every bad day into a thing your coworkers can see and ask about. Camera-off is one of the cheapest accommodations that exists.

ASK FOR IT LIKE THIS

"I'd like to attend recurring meetings with my camera off. I'll stay engaged on audio and in chat."

3 Permission to use AI notes or meeting recordings — where your company allows it

If you can't hold everything that happens in a 45-minute call, a recording or an approved AI notetaker gives you the meeting back. You get to catch what you missed, check what you agreed to, and stop running a transcription service in your head while you're trying to participate.

One caveat worth saying out loud: this one isn't always possible. Plenty of companies restrict recording and AI notetakers to protect confidentiality, client privacy, and intellectual property — and those restrictions are legitimate, not your manager being difficult. Ask, and if the answer is no, ask what *is* permitted. A shared written recap is usually the workaround.

ASK FOR IT LIKE THIS

"Where company policy permits it, I'd like to record meetings or use the approved AI notetaker so I can review what was covered. Where that's not allowed, I'd like a written summary instead."

4 Time limits on meetings

An hour is a limit. Ninety minutes is an endurance event. Capping internal meetings at sixty minutes isn't a personal favor — it protects everyone's focus, and for you it's the difference between finishing the day and losing it.

ASK FOR IT LIKE THIS

"I'd like internal meetings I'm required to attend capped at one hour. If a topic needs more time, I'd rather split it across two sessions."

5 A prearranged flare protocol

Chronic illness is not a steady line. It's peaks and crashes. The mistake is waiting until you're in a crash to figure out the plan, because that is the worst possible moment to negotiate anything.

Agree ahead of time on who you notify, which tasks can move, what has to be covered by someone else, and at what point you take leave. Write it down. Then you're executing a plan instead of improvising while you're sick.

ASK FOR IT LIKE THIS

"I'd like to agree in advance on a flare protocol — who I notify, which deliverables can shift, what gets covered, and when I'd take leave — so we're not working it out case by case."

6 Equipment that fits the body you have

Your employer set up your office when it was in a building. A home setup is the same expense category. Ergonomic chair, sit-stand desk, monitor arm, vertical mouse, split keyboard, footrest, noise-canceling headset, blue-light filtering, larger monitor, speech-to-text software.

ASK FOR IT LIKE THIS

"I'm requesting an ergonomic chair and a sit-stand desk for my home workspace, along with speech-to-text software for days when typing is limited."

7 Permission to eat or drink during calls

Hydration and meal timing aren't optional for a lot of us — they're how you keep blood pressure, blood sugar, and medication schedules from derailing your afternoon. Nobody should be white-knuckling a 3pm meeting because drinking water on camera feels unprofessional.

ASK FOR IT LIKE THIS

"I need to eat and hydrate on a set schedule for medical reasons. I'd like it understood that I may be eating or drinking during calls."

8

Notification-free focus periods

Slack, Teams, email, calendar pings, and the expectation of instant response are a constant low-grade drain, and they are brutal on top of cognitive symptoms. Agreed blocks where routine alerts are silenced give you back the ability to finish one thing.

ASK FOR IT LIKE THIS

"I'd like two agreed focus blocks per day where I mute routine notifications and respond afterward. Anything urgent can reach me by phone."

9

Written instructions, agendas, and recaps

Cognitive symptoms are real and they are not a character flaw. Getting assignments in writing — with priorities and deadlines spelled out — removes the memory tax from every single task and gives you something to check against.

ASK FOR IT LIKE THIS

"I'd like assignments and decisions confirmed in writing, and a short written recap after meetings where work is assigned to me."

10

Advance notice — and a remote option — for travel and in-person events

Offsites, conferences, client visits, "optional" team weeks. Travel is a huge physical cost and it is frequently sprung on people with two weeks' notice. Ask for lead time and ask for an alternative.

ASK FOR IT LIKE THIS

"I need at least 30 days' notice for required travel, and I'd like the option to participate remotely when the event allows it."

Will all of these get approved? *Possibly not.*

But you have the right to ask, and you have the right to a real answer. Your employer can turn down a specific accommodation if it creates an undue hardship or if it removes an essential function of the job — what they're supposed to do instead is come back with an alternative. A flat "no" with nothing after it is not the end of the conversation.

They may also ask you for documentation. Here's how that actually works.

CAN THEY MAKE YOU HAND OVER MEDICAL PROOF?

In the U.S., sometimes yes. But there are limits, and the limits matter. Under the ADA:

- If your disability — or the reason you need the accommodation — isn't obvious, your employer can ask for documentation from an appropriate healthcare provider explaining your condition, what it limits, and why the accommodation is needed.
- If both of those things are already obvious, or you've already handed over enough documentation, they generally can't keep asking for more.
- They generally cannot demand your complete medical records or anything unrelated. The request has to stay limited to establishing the disability and the need for the accommodation.

A letter from your provider explaining how your condition affects your ability to do the work and what adjustment you need is usually enough. A note that just says "this patient requires accommodations" usually isn't — it doesn't give them anything to act on, and it gives them a reason to come back and ask again.

Two things worth doing: put your request in writing, and keep a copy of everything you send.

Reference: EEOC Enforcement Guidance on Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship Under the ADA — eeoc.gov

This is information, not legal advice. I'm a patient advocate, not an employment attorney. If your employer retaliates, stalls, or refuses to engage at all, that's a question for an employment lawyer or your state's fair employment agency.

Keep *going.*

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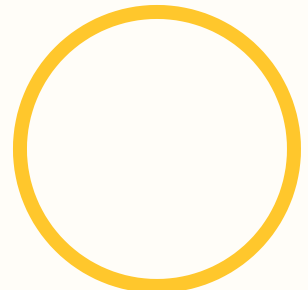
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