

Don't be an April Fool at work

There are a heap of tricks to be played on unsuspecting colleagues on April Fools' Day – wrap a desk in Glad wrap, turning computer screens upside down, inviting them to non-existent meetings – the possibilities are endless. But on the trickiest of days, we're offering you seven top tips on how *not* to be a fool at work. No joke.

1. **Double-check your clocks.** If your partner or kids enjoy getting into the spirit of April Fools' Day, take caution getting ready for work. A tampered alarm clock could throw your typical morning routine out the window, and a gauntlet of tricks around the house could see you running late for that early meeting.
2. **Navigate your workplace with caution.** If you can outsmart office pranksters, the joke's on them. When you get to work, check your desk, chair, phone and other tools of the trade carefully before starting your day. Avoid communal kitchen condiments. Politely decline when offered a stick of gum. Double-check the details before driving across town for a meeting you 'must have missed the memo' about.
3. **Avoid raiding the supply cupboard.** Sure, covering someone's entire desk and all of its contents with Post-it notes may be an impressive feat and gain you notoriety for your pranking skills _ but it's also a huge waste of company resources. Be kind to the environment, and your office manager. Upcycle and recycle in your quest to fool your colleagues.
4. **Beware your inbox.** You may be used to opening dozens of emails each day at work, but beware spam or messages from friends on this day of fools. A seemingly harmless link opened at work could contain something you really don't want played or displayed on your screen – or worse still, could corrupt important office files and set you back on your deadlines.
5. **Prank colleagues with care.** If you really must fool your co-workers – and after all, that's what today is all about – stick to harmless tricks that aren't going to clash with your workplace health and safety standards, or embarrass anyone beyond repair. Swapping their screensaver for Justin Bieber fan art may give them a giggle. Photoshopping them into an inappropriate image will get you

hauled into a meeting with HR.

6. **Don't fool your boss.** Your boss or manager may have a great sense of humour, but a prank gone awry has the potential to put your job in jeopardy. Don't mess with their swively chair, don't glue anything to their desk, and don't offer them any home-baked treats filled with food colouring that could make them look the fool in their important client meeting.
7. **Paranoia = distraction.** You may want to avoid being fooled, but letting caution evolve into paranoia can mean losing focus on the tasks at hand and letting your productivity take a nose-dive. A day of good-natured fun at work doesn't have to leave you distracted – especially since most pranks tend to play out before midday.

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