

# Ergonomic Tips and Tricks

## For Employees Working From Home

# Working from home?

This guide is intended to help employees adopt good ergonomic principles and practices while they are working in a non-typical office setting.

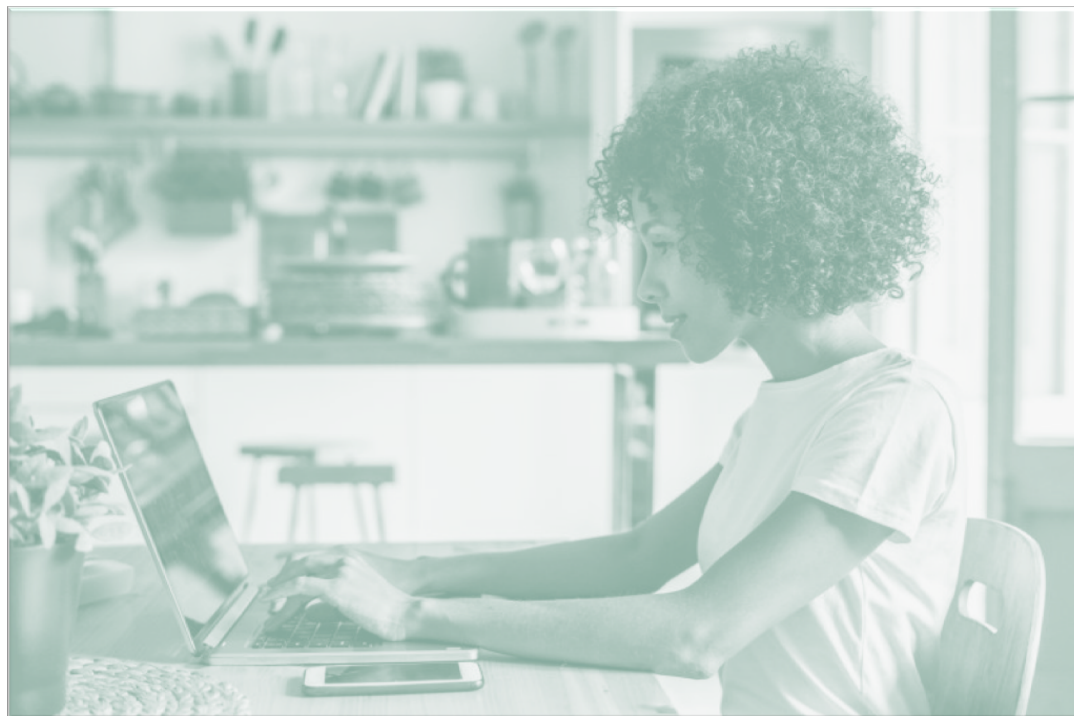
The more you can do to reflect good postures and work habits, the less likely you will be to develop ergonomic-related pains and strains while you are using a computer to do your work.

There are many opportunities to use household items to model postures and equipment positioning that is recommended for best results from an ergonomic perspective. Substituting the equipment you may be used to with other alternatives can effectively achieve the same results in posture and positioning that help to minimize the risk of ergonomic discomfort or injury.

# Office Desk

## Alternatives

- Kitchen/dining table
- Coffee table
- TV trays
- Countertop



## Tips & Tricks

- A table with leg room underneath should be used. This is so that you can be closer to the devices, preventing the need to lean forward.
- When using a TV tray, if possible, adjust the height to minimize having to look down.
- Be aware of table edges. Use a rest pad or ensure your wrists are not pressed against the table edge by placing your devices away from the edge. More info on this can be found on the "Keyboard and Mouse" slide.
- Counters can be used as a standing workstation. Place the keyboard, and mouse on the counter and place the monitor at eye-level.

# Monitor and Laptop

## Alternatives

- TV screen or other devices (i.e. tablet, phone)



## Tips & Tricks

- Raise your monitor to eye level, if it has a height adjustment feature. If not, place books underneath the base.
- Angle the monitor so the top of the monitor is slightly away from you.
- The monitor should be placed about an arm's length away for eye and neck comfort.
- Use the 20, 20, 20 rule – every 20 minutes change your focus to 20 feet away for 20 seconds

# Monitor and Laptop

## Alternatives

TV screen or other devices (i.e. tablet, phone)



## Tips & Tricks

- Connect your laptop to a separate monitor or other display device to achieve a neutral neck posture (i.e. looking straight ahead).
- If you have a separate keyboard and mouse, you can raise your laptop using a book/laptop riser to bring it to eye level.
- If you do not have access to a separate display device, keyboard and/or mouse, ensure you take frequent breaks.

# Keyboard and Mouse

## Alternatives

- If you are using a laptop, an external mouse and keyboard would be beneficial.
- Speech to text software (if available)



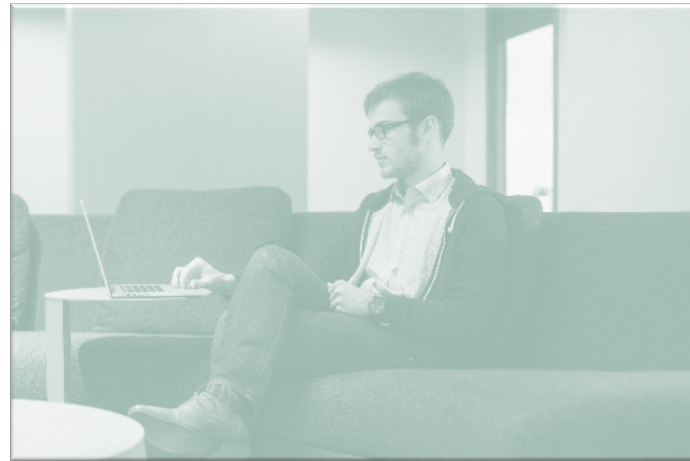
## Tips

- Use a wrist rest pad for mouse and keyboard. If not available, place a soft cloth in front of the keyboard and mouse.
- Ensure that your keyboard lies flat on the work surface.
- Your elbows should be at the same level as your wrists while typing and using the mouse.
- Ensure your keyboard is centered with your monitor (if applicable) and the mouse on the same level and close to the keyboard.

# Chair

## Alternatives

- Limited Chairs
- Non-adjustable chairs
- Working from a couch



## Tips & Tricks

- Try to maintain an upright but slightly reclined position.
- Elevate your work device (i.e. laptop) to eye-level to avoid looking downwards for extended periods of time.
- Use a small pillow or rolled up towel for lumbar/lower back support. Place it between the back of your chair and the small of your back.
- For comfort and added height (if needed) use a cushion, folded blanket or other soft object on the seat of your chair.

# Footrest

## Alternatives

- Use typical household items to replace manufactured foot rests you may be accustomed to



*Use a footrest if your feet are unable to contact the floor (i.e. your feet are dangling/hanging)*

## Tips & Tricks

- Make sure your feet planted firmly with your knees bent at a 90-degree angle. You can adjust your at-homes items to achieve this.
- books, other rigid containers such as small recycling bins, shoe boxes, cardboard boxes, step stools, ottoman etc.



# Accessories

## Alternatives

- Minimize the need for typical accessories



## Tips & Tricks

- Keep frequently used items within an arm's reach (examples: phones, reference documents, files, etc.)
- If you are referring to paper documents, you may benefit from a task light for sufficient lighting.



# Breaks and Stretches

## Alternatives

- Need to stretch?
- Use your environment to change your posture and your focus frequently during the day by integrating a range of different tasks that might not be available to you in an office setting



## Tips & Tricks

- It is important that you take frequent breaks or change posture throughout your workday.
- Stretching is a great way to feel refreshed while also relieving discomfort/strains associated with sitting and standing for prolonged periods of time.
- Go for a walk outside

# Six Key Principles

- Keep moving - regularly vary your body positioning. Don't maintain the same posture or position for extended periods of time
- Maintain good head and neck posture
- Combat eye strain
- Be aware of your overall posture
- Position your chair properly
- Keep your arms close for tasks – avoid awkward reaching

# More Resources

<https://www.spine-health.com/wellness/ergonomics/ten-tips-improving-posture-and-ergonomics>

<https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/ergonomics/office/stretching.html>

<https://thriveglobal.com/stories/why-you-need-a-laptop-stand/>

# Reporting Ergonomic Issues

An employee who is experiencing ergonomic challenges while working from home should report this issues to their Supervisor / Manager, as they normally would in a usual work setting.

Managers / Supervisors who require assistance in addressing the concerns can contact the Occupational Health & Safety section of the Risk Management Department.

Occupational Health & Safety will engage with the employee and the supervisor to help address the concerns and identify appropriate solutions to resolve the issues.