

Setting up a Comfortable Workspace

You are now deeply involved in remote teaching and find yourself sitting more than you used to. You think a standing workstation may improve your situation? Not necessarily. Here is some guidance for improving your workstation. Proper ergonomics — including correct chair height, adequate equipment spacing and good desk posture — can help you and your joints stay comfortable at work.

If you are having pain in the back or side of the neck and shoulder – the problem is not sitting, it is reaching.

Key objects. Whether you stand or sit, keep key objects — such as your telephone, stapler or printed materials — close to your body to minimize reaching. Stand up to reach anything that can't be comfortably reached while sitting.



- **Telephone.** If you frequently talk on the phone and type or write at the same time, place your phone on speaker or use a headset rather than cradling the phone between your head and neck.
- **Footrest.** If your chair is too high for you to rest your feet flat on the floor —or the height of your desk requires you to raise the height of your chair — use a footrest. If a footrest is not available, try using a small stool or a stack of sturdy books instead. Recommend the Halter F7054 Premium Ergonomic Adjustable Angle Foot Rest - 18.9" X 12.2" - Black/Brown. Available at https://www.amazon.com/Halter-F7054-Premium-Ergonomic-Adjustable/dp/B06XCVSL3G/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=Halter+F7054+Premium+Ergonomic+Adjustable+Angle+Foot+Rest+-+18.9%22+X+12.2%22+-+Black%2FBrown&qid=1601254042&s=office-products&sr=1-1
- **Desk.** Under the desk, make sure there's clearance for your knees, thighs and feet. If the desk is too low and can't be adjusted, place sturdy boards or blocks under the desk legs. If the desk is too high and can't be adjusted, raise your chair. Don't store items under your desk.
- **Monitor.** Place the monitor directly in front of you, about an arm's length away. If your neck hurts, it is because the monitor is placed too high. **The top of the screen should be at or slightly below eyelevel.** The monitor should be directly behind your keyboard. If you wear bifocals, lower the monitor an additional 1 to 2 inches for more comfortable viewing. Place your monitor so that the brightest light source is to the side.
- **Chair.** Choose a chair that supports your spinal curves. Adjust the height of your chair so that your feet rest flat on the floor or on a footrest and your thighs are parallel to the floor. Your district has a standard chair – you should not go shopping on the internet and buy just any old chair. Check with your Administration for information on the District's standard for an office chair.
- **Keyboard and mouse.** Place your mouse within easy reach and on the same surface as your keyboard. While typing or using your mouse, keep your wrists straight, your upper arms close to your body, and your hands at or slightly below the level of your elbows. Use keyboard shortcuts to reduce extended mouse use. If possible, adjust the sensitivity of the mouse so you can use a light touch to operate it. Alternate the hand you use to operate the mouse by moving the mouse to the other side of your keyboard.

If you have lower back or leg pain – the problem could be your posture.

Posture. It is all about posture. Maintain good posture to prevent aches and pains. This means a relaxed sitting position.

- Your elbow should be level with the keyboard.
- Your feet should be placed on a footrest, and
- The angle between your upper body and your lower body should be 90°.



You have adjusted your chair and your desktop items – and, you still think you want to stand. **DO NOT JUST ORDER ANY DESKTOP RISER.** Consider the following:

Are you less than 6' tall?

If you are less than 6' tall and your desk set up at a corner, the VariDesk® Cube Corner® 36 will work best. <https://www.vari.com/sit-stand-converter-varidesk-cube-corner-36/DC-CBCRNR36.html>



If you are less than 6' tall and your desk set up on a straight work area – like a desk or table? If so, then the VariDesk® Pro Plus™ 36 is for you. <https://www.vari.com/sit-stand-converter-varidesk-pro-plus-36/DC-PP36.html>



If you are less than 6' tall and your desk set up – and, you primarily use a laptop, then the VariDesk® Laptop 30 will work best. <https://www.vari.com/compact-sit-stand-converter-varidesk-laptop-30/DC-LPTP30.html>



Are you taller than 6'? If so, the desktop units above will not work for you. Consider a table that will rise. Suggest the 30" x 60" standing desk. <https://www.vari.com/electric-standing-desk-60x30/FD-ESD6030.html>



NOTE: If you are going to stand, then a gel mat is a must. It is very important that you use the mat while standing at the workstation. If you don't stand on a mat, then your back will hurt and you will have spent money on something you will never use. Consider the Standing Desk Mat with Heel Grab by UPLIFT Desk <https://www.upliftdesk.com/standing-desk-mat-with-heel-grab-by-uplift-desk/>



Accessories: If you are going to stand, you will need wireless components to work with a standing workspace.

1. Keyboard – suggest the Wireless Keyboard Logitech® K350 Wireless Keyboard, Black Item. Office Depot # 160092 or https://www.amazon.com/Logitech-K350-2-4Ghz-Wireless-Keyboard/dp/B002MMY4WY/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=logitech+k350&qid=1594869896&sr=8-1
2. Mouse - Wireless Mouse. Recommend the Logitech MX Vertical Wireless Mouse, Rechargeable, Graphite. https://www.amazon.com/Logitech-Vertical-Wireless-Mouse-Rechargeable/dp/B07FNJB8TT?ref=bl_dp_s_web_2529810011
3. Mouse rest. Wrist rest for the mouse. Recommend [IMAK™ ergoBeads™ Mouse Support, 5.75", Black](#). Office Depot Item # 205384.

Whether you sit or stand, the most important thing you need to do is to MOVE. Our bodies were not meant to stay in one position. Try to move every 20-30 minutes.

- Get up and walk around the room.
- Get up and drink some water.
- Set your calendar app with regular reminders to stand up and move.
- Stand up and stretch.
- **Remember, your students have been sitting too – so, incorporate standing and moving into your teaching time.**

Stretching Exercises: You can do most of these stretches while seated.

1. Seated spinal rotation

- While seated, cross your arms over your chest.
- Grab your shoulders.
- Rotate your upper body from the waist, turning gently from left to right as far as feels comfortable.
- You should feel a tension on both side of your lower back as it stretches out.



2. Posterior shoulder stretch

- Hold one arm across your body.
- Pull your elbow into your chest.
- You should feel your shoulder gently stretching.



3. Shoulder shrugs

- Gently lift your shoulders.
- Let them slowly fall.
- You should feel tension being released as your shoulders drop.



4. Sitting back extensions

- Sit straight with your feet together.
- Put the palms of your hands into the small of your back.
- Lean back over your hands, feeling your lower back stretch out.



5. Neck rotations

- Keep your head upright.
- Gently turn your head from side to side.
- As you turn your head, try to move it past your shoulder.
- You should feel the muscles on the outside of your neck gradually stretching.



6. Upper shoulder and neck stretch

- Sit on one hand.
- Tilt your head away from the hand you're sitting on.
- Tilt your head slightly forward, towards your shoulder.
- You should feel the muscles in your neck and shoulder being stretched.
- Change sides, and repeat.



7. Shoulder extension – one

- Stand up and stretch your arms out behind you.
- Clasp your hands together and gently lift your arms.
- You should feel your shoulders and chest stretching.



8. Shoulder extension – two

- Hold both arms above your head.
- Link your hands with your palms facing upwards.
- Reach as high as possible.
- You should feel your shoulders stretching.

