

Safety Newsletter



Central Region
School Insurance Group

A quarterly publication for injury and illness prevention

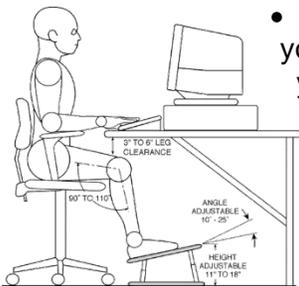
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Setting Up Your Workstation at Home

Ergonomics is a process of fitting the work environment to the worker to provide optimum comfort and avoid injury. It should never be the other way around! You shouldn't have to feel uncomfortable while working at your desk.

Try adjusting the workstation you have set up at home.

- Adjust seat to desk
- Adjust seat to person
- Adjust keyboard/mouse
- Adjust monitor
- Adjust primary tasks
- Adjust secondary tasks



- Line up your ears over your shoulders, your shoulders over your elbows and your elbows over your hips. If standing, hips over your knees and knees over your ankles.

- Your chair should be adjusted properly to fit your body and assist in maintaining your posture.

- Sit all the way back in your chair and don't slouch. Rest your back on the chair's back rest. This will lessen muscle fatigue as you sit throughout the day.
- Use a foot rest. The foot rest will help push you back into your chair and help you to maintain proper posture.

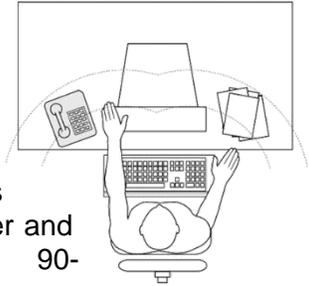
Where is your computer monitor?

- Some employees opt to place their monitors to the left or right side of their desk, requiring head shifted at an angle in order to view the monitor. This will cause neck and shoulder pain. Move your monitor so it is square and directly in front of you.
- Adjust the monitor so that the point, three inches down from the top of the monitor, is at eye level. This may require putting the monitor on a stand or taking the monitor off the stand and placing it directly on the desk.
- If you have multiple monitors, set them at the same height as each other.



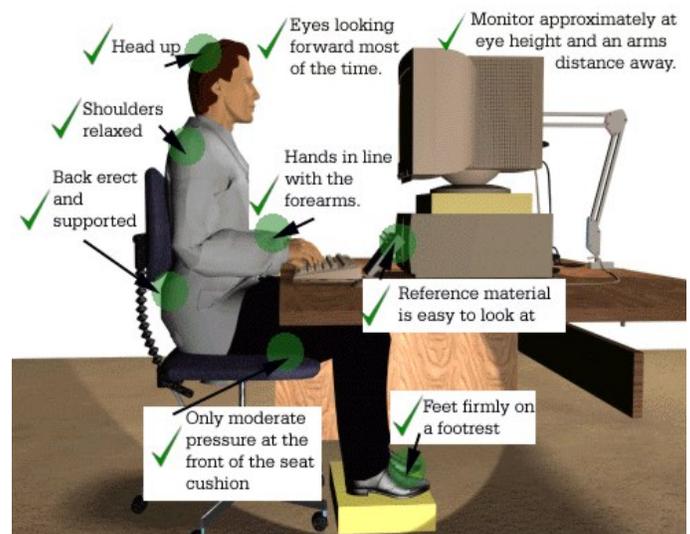
Keyboard and mouse

- Keep your keyboard and mouse on the same plane and as close together as possible.
- Place the keyboard and mouse at a height where your elbows would be bent at a 90-degree angle when in use. This is the most optimal position.
- Make sure your elbow is directly under your shoulder and bent at approximately 90-degrees.
- Be sure to place the mouse at the same level as the keyboard



Work and rest cycles

- Sitting for long periods of time is unhealthy and harsh on the body. Try to break up work tasks so that you are getting up from your chair periodically throughout the day.
- Set a timer to remind yourself to stand up, stretch, and move around for a few minutes each hour.



Creating a Workstation

Make sure to create a separate and distinct work space in your home, even if it is in the corner of a room. Ergonomics at home doesn't have to be fancy or even store bought. Here are some household items that can serve you well!

- Ironing Board = Sit Stand Desk
- Notebook Binder = Lap Desk
- Pillows = Back Support
- Books = Monitor/Laptop Riser

Workstation Exercises

Stretching regularly helps to reduce muscle tension, increase energy, improve circulation and make you more productive! Try these Stretch Tips from Performance Based Ergonomics: Stretches should be performed 2 - 3 times per day, hold all stretches for 7-10 seconds, switch sides and repeat, please note that all stretches can be done sitting or standing.



Neck Stretch. Drop your head slowly to the left, trying to touch your left ear to your left shoulder. Repeat on the right side. Slowly drop your chin to your chest, turn your head all the way to the left, then turn all the way to the right.



Back and Side Stretch. Interlace your fingers and lift your arms over your head, keeping the elbows straight. Press arms as far back as you can. To stretch your sides, slowly lean to the left and then to the right.



Shoulder Stretch. Hold your right arm with your left hand just above the elbow. Gently push your elbow toward your left shoulder. Hold stretch for 7 – 10 seconds. Repeat with your left arm.



Upper Back Stretch. Interlace your fingers and then straighten out your arms in front of you. Your palms should be facing away from you as you do this stretch. Bow the head down and let your upper back round out. Hold for 10 – 15 seconds. Rest. Repeat.



Leg Stretch. Cross your leg and place your foot onto the opposite knee. Keep the knee at a 90-degree angle. Sit up nice and tall and slowly bend at the hip joint and lean forward until you feel a stretch in the outer hip and thigh. Switch legs and repeat.

Additional Tips for Working from Home

Set Real Work Hours. Now that you have your office or work area set up, it's time to get down to business — literally. You will need to make working from home an everyday commitment – so, set specific business or work hours. Enforce a hard limit at the end of the day. Distance yourself from work, so you don't work nonstop. **Regardless of your schedule, be sure to establish set work hours to follow each day. Communicate your work schedule to co-workers, teams, and supervisor.**

Avoid Work Creep. A career that lets you work from home can be invasive in your personal life. This is because if you are always home and near your work, then your work *creeps* into your home life. Yes, the risk is real, but only if you let it. This goes back to setting work hours. By setting specific work hours and sticking to them, you will increase performance and develop a healthy work schedule. **At the end of the day, shut down your laptop, set your work app to “away,” and shut your office door.**

Discover Your High Productivity Periods. Every individual is most productive at different times of the day. For example, some individuals are morning people, and they are most productive and focused during the morning hours. For others, their most productive time in the workday is the evenings.



Discover when you are most productive and build your work schedule around your peak productivity periods.

Update Your To-Do List Every Morning. When working from home, it can be challenging to keep track of what you have to do throughout your workday. It's easy to lose sight of priorities, tasks, and deadlines.

- Start your day by reviewing priorities for the day. When you make your task list, stick to it.
- Set goals and time limits for each task. After you complete each task, cross it off the list. This simple technique is both effective and fulfilling.
- Use a Planner. In addition to making to-do lists, get into the habit of using a calendar or planner. By organizing tasks into projects, you can attack them one bite at a time. **Use a planner to log all tasks and activities, no matter if you work remotely or in the office.**

Plan the work and work the plan.

Stress and Coping

Fear and anxiety about Covid-19 is overwhelming and cause strong emotions. **Things you can do to support yourself**

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, meditate
- Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- **Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.**