



OUT OF THE OFFICE?

Take Workplace Ergonomics Principles Home With You.



You've probably occasionally worked remotely in the past, but working from home requires a better workstation than most home settings have. Setting up an at-home ergonomic workstation will lead to telework mission success! Follow this checklist to ensure your home office functions as well as your work office, even if it takes a little creative engineering.

IF YOU HAVE AN ADJUSTABLE OFFICE CHAIR:

- Adjust the height, seat depth, armrests and lumbar support of your chair to minimize muscle strain and fatigue and allow for neutral posture.
 - Head and neck should be upright and in-line with torso.
 - Thighs and hips should be supported and parallel to the floor.
 - Torso should be vertical or angled slightly back and fully supported by the chair's backrest, similar to sitting in a car.
 - Feet should be resting on the floor or a footrest. A sturdy box can serve as a substitute.
 - Knees should be the same height or slightly lower than hips, and feet should be kept slightly forward. There should be a two to three finger distance between the backs of your knees and the edge of your seat.
 - Shoulders should be relaxed.
 - Elbows should be close to body and bent between 90 and 120 degrees.
 - Hands, wrists and forearms should be straight, inline and parallel to the floor.

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE AN ADJUSTABLE OFFICE CHAIR:

- Sit at a chair with a back if possible, preferably not on a couch.
 - Using a chair with back support helps to prevent slouching — slouching adds considerable stress to your spinal system and can lead to a backache/discomfort.
 - Try different chairs in your house to find the one that allows you to best meet the guidance provided above for adjustable office chairs.
- Use a pillow or rolled-up towel at the back of your chair for lumbar support when sitting in a chair with a backrest.
- Sit on an extra chair cushion to raise the elevation of your body if the desk is too tall (as most fixed-height desks are) so that forearms are level with the work surface.
- Use a footrest or box if your feet don't reach the floor.

GENERAL OFFICE SETUP

- Use a separate keyboard, mouse and monitor, if you have them available.
- Place a soft rolled-up towel in front of your keyboard and mouse to prevent contact stress if a wrist rest is not available.
- Place your laptop on a taller surface, such as a bar-height kitchen counter, or on top of a sturdy item, such as an upside down laundry basket or a tall box placed on top of a table/desk if you would like to switch to a standing position.
- Center monitor(s) at a distance that is easy to read the characters on the screen.
- Adjust monitor height so that the top of the screen (tool bar) is eye level by using a box, books, a ream of paper, board games, etc.
- Tilt your laptop screen back to create additional distance.
- Consider using a separate or wireless keyboard and mouse, if possible, so a laptop can be raised to position screen at eye level.
- Position your computer away from direct light using blinds to prevent glare on your screen and use a desk lamp when viewing printed documents if lighting is low.

continued

GENERAL OFFICE SETUP *cont.*

- Arrange the workspace so that frequently-used items are within reach. Your computer mouse should be positioned next to your keyboard.
- Prop documents against a piece of sturdy cardboard or a clipboard that is angled between your monitor and keyboard if a document holder is not available.
- Use speaker phone, jabber software or your computer mic when on conference calls, instead of cradling your phone.
- Take mini-breaks about every 20 minutes away from repetitive tasks and from sitting to reset your body's natural position.
- Rest your eyes by looking away from your screen at a distant object for 10 seconds every 20 minutes.

View the handout **"Make Your Workstation Work for You"** to see a visual example of an ergonomically-sound workstation and some exercises you can do at your workstation. If you have ergonomic questions or concerns, reach out to your center's health and safety group.



SIDE TO SIDE



SHRUG IT OFF



LEAN BACK



SHAKE IT OUT



ROTATE, REPEAT



BEND AT THE WRIST