

COVID-19

Working from Home?

Creating an Ergonomic Workspace at Home During COVID-19



Now that many organizations have moved to remote working for many of their employees, it's important to think about setting your office space up properly. You will want to design a home workspace that promotes good posture and movement to help you prevent neck and back pain as well as eye strain if you work in front of a computer screen for extended periods of time. Follow these ergonomic tips to help make working from home as comfortable and productive as possible:

1. Space

- Make sure the location you pick is well lit, provides privacy, is uncluttered and free from distraction.

2. Chair

- Choose a chair that supports your back.
- 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.
- Adjust the armrests so that your arms gently rest on them with your shoulders relaxed.
- Adjust the back so that it is straight or in a very slightly reclined position, and fully supports your back and lumbar with no gaps.
- If you need lumbar support and don't have a lumbar pillow, use a rolled towel instead.

3. Desk

- Ensure there is clearance for your knees, thighs and feet under your desk.
- If your desk is too low and not adjustable, place sturdy boards or blocks under its legs.
- If your desk is too high, raise your chair.
- Use a footrest to support your feet as needed, or use a small stool or stack of sturdy boards or books if you don't have a footrest.

4. Monitor

- Place the monitor directly in front of you, about an arm's length away. The top of the screen should be at or slightly below eye level.
- Use a laptop stand or a book to maintain the monitor at the proper height. The monitor should be directly behind your keyboard.
- Place your monitor so that the brightest light source is to the side.

5. 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.

6. Laptop

- Limit your time of continuous laptop usage by taking frequent breaks.
- If your laptop comes with a docking station, or if you have a regular sized keyboard and mouse, make sure you use them.
- Take advantage of the laptop's mobility by setting up an alternative work surface of suitable height, such as using a large Rubbermaid container and switch between sitting and standing.

7. Phone

- If you frequently talk on the phone and type or write at the same time, place your phone on speaker or use a headset or earbuds.
- Do not cradle the phone between your head and neck.

8. Footrest

- Use a 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.
- If a footrest is not available, use a small stool or a stack of sturdy boards or books instead. Do not work with your feet dangling.

Try to replicate your previous work routine: If you used to take a walk at lunchtime, continue to do that. If you went to the gym daily, try to find a virtual class you can join to simulate that. One of the most important ergonomic principles is to take periodic stretch breaks.

Keep moving and take breaks: Even with the perfect office set up, you should not sit in a chair all day. Instead, take a break. Change your position, stretch, and move when needed. Try making a change every 20-30 minutes. Taking regular breaks helps you stay focused over long periods of time. Remember to schedule breaks in your day.

Source: https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/eccc/documents/pdf/corporate-info/covid-19/2020-04-08_Ergo_TeleworkTips_E.pdf

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