

TOP 5 TIPS FOR HOME OFFICE ERGONOMICS

1. DESIGNATE A HOME OFFICE WORKSPACE

While it may be tempting to set your iPad on your lap and get to work with a coffee in hand from the comfort of your couch, this is not a long term solution to working from home. Not only does it put your body at risk for awkward postures and repetitive strain injuries, but it also makes it more difficult to tune out distractions.



Ideally, everyone would have an extra room in their house where they could close the door and get to work. If you aren't one of these people, try carving out a space in part of a common area or bedroom. Take a look around your home and reconsider every corner, closet and nook. Get creative with your space!

2. ADJUST YOUR CHAIR TO MAINTAIN A NEUTRAL POSTURE



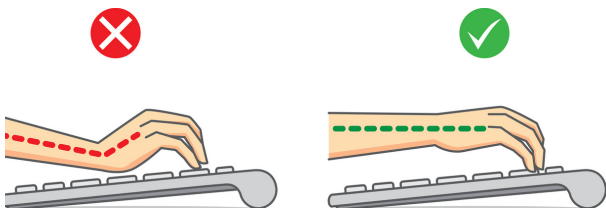
A neutral posture is a comfortable posture in which the joints are aligned. When we aren't in a neutral posture, our muscles take on the work and can get tired and sore throughout the day.

- ➔ **Seat Height:** your feet should be able to rest flat on the floor with no pressure under your thighs. If your seat is non-adjustable and your feet are hanging, consider adding a footrest.
- ➔ **Arm Rest :** to allow your elbows to bend at approx. 90 degrees, consider lowering or removing the armrest
- ➔ **Back Rest:** your backrest should include lumbar support to help maintain your natural lumbar curve while not restricting movement
- ➔ **Head:** should be centered over your neck and shoulders

3. PLACING YOUR KEYBOARD AND MOUSE

Because mouse work involves exact and repetitive movements, it can lead to small muscles becoming tired and overworked. To alleviate this, experiment with different options (trackball, column or vertical mouse devices) and remember to maintain a neutral, loose and relaxed grip with a straight wrist.

Keyboard tips:



- ➔ With your elbows bent at approx. 90 degrees and wrists straight, your fingers should rest comfortably on your keyboard.
- ➔ If the keyboard is too high, your elbows and shoulders may compensate which can lead to fatigue and pain. Alternatively, if your keyboard is too low, your posture may be negatively affected.

4. PLACING YOUR MONITOR

Ideally, your desk should be adjustable or have attachments that allow the monitor and keyboard to be placed at different heights. If not, consider adding an external keyboard and monitor riser (or some big textbooks!) to your workstation.

Because your eyes naturally assume a straightforward and downcast gaze, your monitor should be placed approx. 15 degrees below the horizontal line of vision. When considering viewing distance (space between your screen and eyes), a good rule of thumb is about 15-30 inches from your eyes or a distance that allows you to easily read your screen in the absence of eye pain.



Laptops can pose challenges to the ideal work station set up, as the keyboard and monitor are fixed and not adjustable. If you are working from a laptop, consider using a laptop stand or large books to raise the screen to a comfortable position and connect an external keyboard and mouse. If this is not possible, prioritize the height of your keyboard and adjust your gaze while maintaining a neutral posture.

5. REMEMBER TO MOVE

Incorporate movement into your workday in as many ways as you can to prevent muscle aches and to promote blood flow and circulation. Here are some tips for staying active:

- ➡ Set a timer to take a quick break from your office space once every hour. Go for a lap around your house, get a glass of water or look outside. Not only can you practice mindfulness, hydrate or stretch your legs - but also prevent eye strain!
- ➡ Instead of moving from your computer screen to your phone or TV screen during your lunch break, take 20 minutes to go for a walk outdoors.
- ➡ Incorporate simple stretches at your workstation throughout the day. You can find some great stretches here:
<https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/ergonomics/office/stretching.html>



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