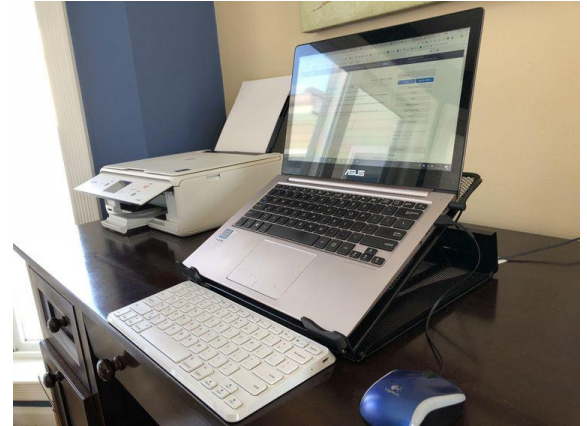


HOME OFFICE ERGONOMIC TIP SHEET

As the need to work from home continues, it is important to consider the ergonomics of the spaces we have created. Home office set-ups can vary from a dedicated home office - complete with appropriate furniture - to a laptop placed on the kitchen table.

Early on in the transition to a home work station is the opportune time to review key ergonomic principles to ensure your home office, what ever it comprises of, is as ergonomically correct as possible to minimize any negative impacts and support your productivity. The same ergonomic principles used in the corporate office apply to the home office, though some extra creativity may be needed in the home office where tools and devices are not as readily available.



1. Select an appropriate work location

For seated work, consider picking a spot with a table or work surface that is 27-29” high. Ideally, when typing you want your elbows to be at 90 degrees and your forearms parallel to the work surface (Image #1). If the surface is too high, you may find an increase in shoulder and neck discomfort.

If you can use a counter or filing cabinet for a standing workstation with your laptop, you may need to ‘build- up’ with supports underneath, such as boxes, to achieve the ideal 90 degree elbow position (Image #2).

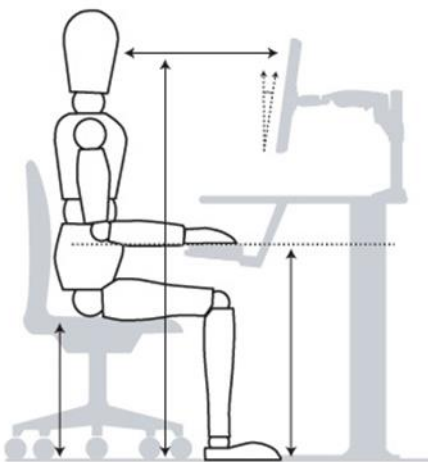


Image #1

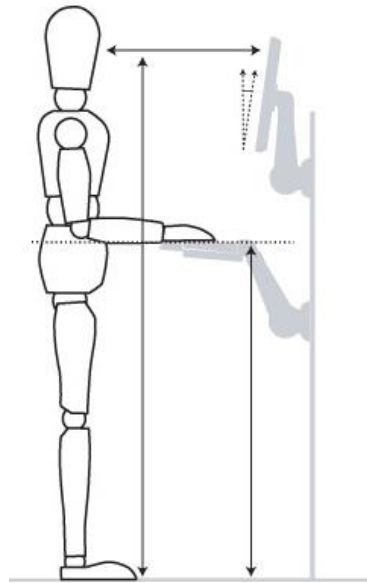


Image #2

2. Select the best chair available

The best chair is an adjustable office chair that you can adjust to your stature. If you don't have one, consider your other chairs (kitchen/dining room and any others) – do they have different heights, back and arm supports? Select one that places your seated elbow height as close to level with your work surface height as possible, plus ideally provides back support, allowing you to sit upright (hip to back angle of 90-110 degrees) with your upper body weight supported on the backrest. If your work surface remains slightly higher than your seated elbow height, add a flat cushion to the chair (Image #3).



Image #3

3. Find a footrest

Once you are seated, take a look at your thighs. They should be parallel with the floor, with your feet firmly planted. If you are of average stature or shorter, there is a good chance that you would benefit from using a footrest. A stack of legal -sized copy paper, or a large flat book are options you can use while working at home if you do not have a footrest.

4. External devices

Laptops are not ideal for prolonged use unless they are connected to external input devices (mouse and keyboard). Working directly off your laptop results in a monitor height that is too low (unless you are a bifocal lens wearer) and increased strain on the neck. External input devices allow you to raise the monitor (on a box or other lift) so that it sits a better viewing height (Image #3). If you do not have external devices, tilt your monitor back to reduce the viewing angle.

5. Breaks

Whether you are working from a purpose-built home office or the kitchen table with a laptop, ensure that you are getting up from your desk frequently, every 30-60 minutes to stretch and walk around. If you are not able to create the “ideal” set up, getting up and changing postures is more important. When using a portable laptop, consider alternating between standing and sitting, or pacing around your space while on telephone conferences. Frequent stretching is also recommended.

6. Additional resources

- [Office Ergonomics – The Basics](#)
- [Office Ergonomics – Visual Setup Guide](#)
- [Computer Stretches](#)

For further information, please contact the Safety Office directly – [Andrew Scheifele](#), Manager, Safety Office.