

Best Practices for At-Home Ergonomics

Many of us are suddenly working from home, in less than ideal circumstances. To avoid work becoming a (literal) pain in the neck, use these strategies to ensure your at-home-workstation is as ergonomically correct as possible.

Wherever you're sitting, whether it's an office chair or kitchen chair, make sure that:

- You have adequate back support so the ears are in line with the shoulders and hips.
 - If not, try adjusting your chair (if possible) or adding a pillow to act as a lumbar support for your lower back.
- Your shoulders are relaxed and level when keyboarding and using the mouse.
 - If not, raise/lower your chair or work surface height – try using books to prop up monitor screens or your laptop if you're using an external keyboard. Consider using your ironing board as a height-adjustable desk!
- Your hands are in line or slightly lower than your elbows.
 - If not, try folding a small towel to use as a wrist rest along the length of your keyboard.
- Your arms are relaxed and your wrists are in a neutral/straight position (not up, down, or to one side).
 - If not, try the homemade wrist-rest as above.
 - Make sure your wrists are at the same level and as close to the keyboard as possible.
 - Adjust your chair height, if possible.
 - Align your keyboard, monitor, and chair in a straight line.
- Your thighs are parallel to the floor and your knees are at the same height as your hips.
 - If not, try raising your chair (if possible) or adding a footrest – use books or old binders.
- You have adequate space beneath your work surface to move legs.
 - If not, remove any objects under your workspace.
- Your documents and equipment are positioned correctly.
 - Keep frequently used items at the 10 and 2 o'clock positions and avoid reaching across your body.
 - Position your computer screen with your eyes naturally hitting the top of the screen, and reduce glare and brightness by adjusting your blinds and overhead lights. Use a task lamp if available; shine it away from the monitor.

Extra tips:

- If you're working at home on a laptop, see if you can bring your external keyboard and mouse from your workplace, or even your monitor if allowed. This will give you more flexibility in your at-home workspace.
- If your workstation is not ideal, try to vary your tasks so you're not in the same position and posture all day; take frequent mini-breaks and get up and move around! Try standing or pacing when taking phone calls.

- Try to set up an area that is dedicated to work that you can leave at the end of the day.

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