Ergonomic Tips for Temporary Home Workstations
Ideal Sitting Posture

• Want to ensure that body is in a “neutral” positions
External Equipment

• If you have a “proper” desk at home then set it up according to ergonomic principles
  • “Proper” meaning all the required equipment including height adjustable keyboard tray

• If you are using a laptop on a desk or table be aware that you will likely begin to experience muscle aches and pain.

• Ideally, an external keyboard, mouse and monitor should be utilized with the laptop serving as the hard drive only
Work Area

• Find a suitable location to set up your work space

• Make sure it is a dedicated work space if possible, if not possible set it up and take it down each day at the start and end of work time.

• Take into account the amount of light present (make sure there is plenty of light – natural light if possible), pick a spot that has limited external noise or distractions.
Work Surface

• Hard, stable, flat... large enough to fit required work equipment. Make sure there is space beneath for leg placement.
  • Examples – desk, table, counter, folding table
• Ironing board – height adjustable, stable, large etc.
Chair

- Locate as many different chairs within your house as possible to compare which would be best for you.

- Adjustable office chair is best.

- Stable base with back rest is essential – **NO** ball or stools preferably.

- Height of chair should attempt to adhere to joint angles as much as possible – less modification required. Try to get elbows at or slightly above work surface.
Chair

- If chair is too low for work surface place pillow/cushion, stacked towels, etc on seat to raise body.
- If chair is too high – cause feet to dangle- use books, boxes, crate, pop case, stacked towels (in pillow case) to elevate feet.
- If seat pan is too large place towel, pillow etc., between back and back rest. May need one at both lumbar and thoracic regions.
Monitor

• If using a laptop best to get an external monitor.

• No external monitor - raise laptop (if external keyboard and mouse available) by placing books, boxes, etc., beneath laptop.

• No external keyboard/mouse - raise monitor portion as much as possible
Monitor

- Tilt screen by angling the laptop keypad. Use binder or other raised angled item – could modify a box my cutting down one side. Could use a book and place it half way under laptop so back is elevated.
Document Holder

- Document holders – use if have one.
- No document holder - make one - with a vertical binder, vertical book, magazine holder, cereal box, cardboard etc.
Keyboard and mouse

- If external devices are available put at wrist height. If not angle keyboard of laptop to get best angles possible.
- Wrist and mouse rests – can make with small rolled up towels, socks, pool noodle, etc.
Telephone Calls

• Place as close as possible.
• Utilize speaker option.
• Use a pair of headphones
• Do calls from standing or walking.
Homemade Standing Workstation

• Bar style counters or tables may allow for this type of posture
• Can also use an ironing board or even a large box or tote placed on the table
Most Important

• Take multiple breaks – every 20-30 minutes get up and move around. The less ergonomically sound your workstation is the more movement is essential. Use a timer!

• Take phone calls while walking or standing, take set coffee and lunch breaks as you would in your normal office.

• If you are just utilizing a laptop with no external devices then it can be moved easily. Elevate it and work standing then sit again etc.
Temporary Ergonomic Home Assessments

• OHCOW is now offering a Virtual Home Office Ergonomic Assessment
• Available to anyone in Ontario who is currently working from home, and is concerned about their workstation set-up, or suffering from a Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) (or chronic pain) at NO charge.
• Service provides individual assessments performed 1:1 by an OHCOW Ergonomist via email, photos (or video), and telephone (or video conferencing).
• Will focus on the use of available resources (eg. office equipment, furniture, household items, etc.) to improve workstation set-up (and use). Recommendations will be in keeping with the current CSA Z412 Standard: “Office Ergonomics - An application standard for workplace ergonomics.”
• To contact one of OHCOW’s Ergonomists for a virtual home office ergonomic assessment, please contact ergo@ohcow.on.ca to get started.
For More Information Contact your Local OHCOW Clinic

1-877-817-0336
www.ohcow.on.ca

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