

Working From Home – Ergonomic Guide



The Basic Message

We must move and change position often during a work day

Even if you get in the most 'ergonomic' position, if you don't move, don't take breaks and don't change position then you will have issues

Basic principles are good but individual factors may override some decisions. It is ok that one solution doesn't work for everybody

Work through this guide to assist you with your home workplace and then come back regularly to revisit specific areas as needed

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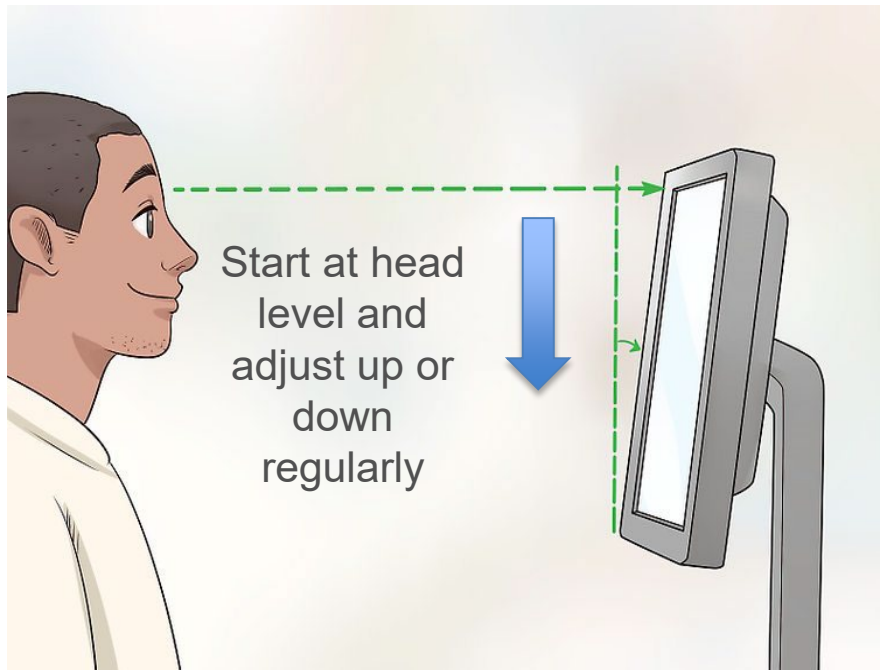
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Setting up a Computer Screen

Eye and neck muscles fatigue less looking down

- 1) Try to start with the top of monitor at top of head
- 2) Change this daily and weekly within a range (lower, but not higher than point 1)
- 3) Take breaks from your monitor (look away into the distance often)
- 4) If you can't move your screen, move yourself



You can work with good ergonomic practices with any screen (even a laptop or TV) by taking regular breaks and moving

Chairs - Arm Support

Arms and heads are heavy. Arms weigh about 5-6% of your bodyweight or about 5kgs and heads weigh about 6kgs. This results in a lot of pull through your neck

Risk Factors

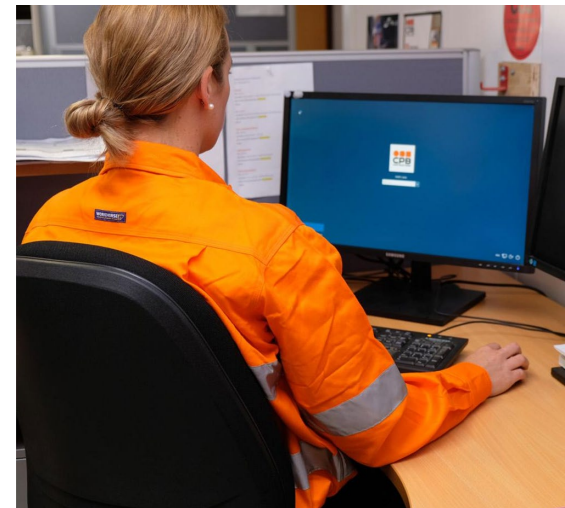
Exertion: sitting in a static position with arm weight dragging on body

Long duration: hours without a break or change in task

Actions:

De-load your neck and shoulders by having support, either by arm rests on your chair or resting on the desk

Remember to take regular breaks and move your arms differently to when working



Chairs - Supporting your Back

Risk factors

- Uncomfortable spine position
- Long duration
- Any position can be ok if it is for a short period

Tips

- Use and know the features of your chair
- Sit, stand and move often
- Take advantage of natural breaks in work tasks e.g. walk around when on the phone and use a headset

Don't have a fancy chair?

Remember to breaks, stand up and move around. Don't be afraid to change your seating position regularly

Chairs - Adjusting

Step 1: Adjust the seat tilt angle

Try a forward tilt

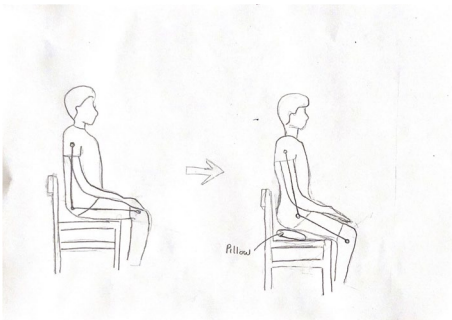


Why?

- Flat seat and upslope seat place your spine in a relative “C” shape
- If your knees are lower than your hips your back naturally adopts the natural “S” shape of your spine

Don't have a fancy chair?

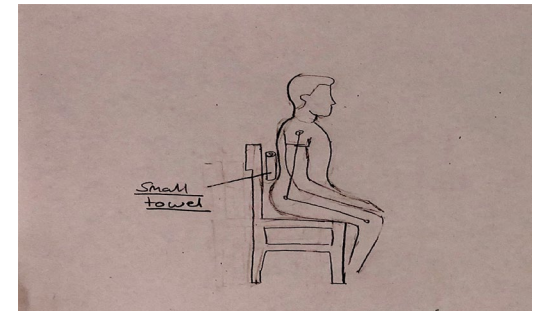
try adding a pillow under your buttocks (not the thighs)



Sit on the edge of the chair



try adding a small rolled up towel into the small of your back

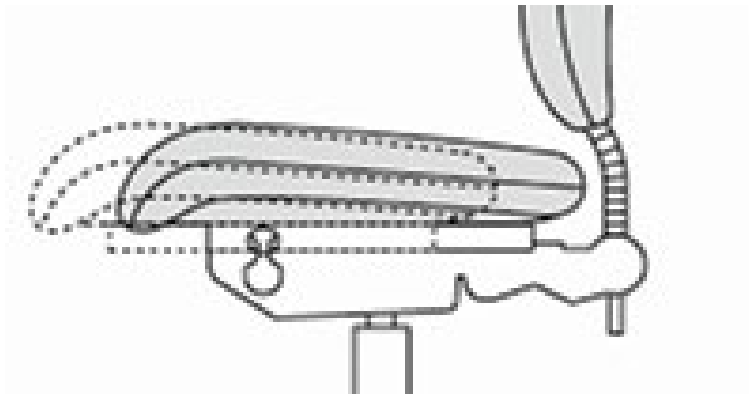


Step 2: Seat pan slide

- Many seats let you adjust the depth of the seat to accommodate for short and longer legs
- Usually the front left lever on most seats
- Tip: start with buttocks at back of seat and see where the seat comes to your thighs

Step 3: Seat back angle

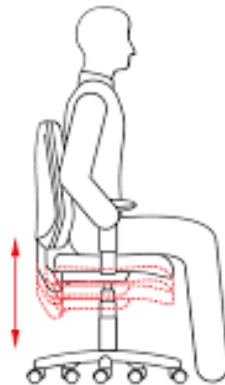
- Back right lever on most chairs
- Adjust the seat back for your comfort
- Some chairs offer a “floating” position which can give you changing positions e.g. on the phone/ meetings
- You don’t need a chair with back adjustment, just take regular breaks



Chairs - Adjusting

Step 4: Seat height

- Arm support will usually govern how high your seat should be
- Adjust your chair so that your legs, feet and arms rest comfortably
- Most workers have the seat too low
- Foot rests can be good and you can try them for comfort



Step 5: Lumbar support height

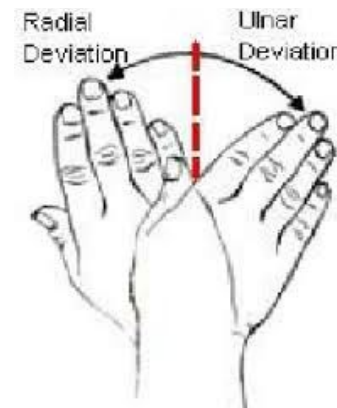
- Usually the last thing to adjust
- Arm support will usually govern how high
- Most workers also have this too low

Don't have a chair with lumbar support? Try adding a small rolled up towel into the small of your back



Risk factors

- Small muscles: fatigue relatively quickly
- Long duration
- Hours without a break or change in task
- Repetition
- Mouse and wrist pads can lead to your hand getting stuck in one spot and then your hand goes side to side
- Just because your mouse pad says “support” it doesn’t mean it really is supporting you



Factors to consider for using a mouse

- Shoulder position: Further away from body = more uncomfortable = added risk
- Wrist position vertical alignment can change positions; but can add in other combined wrist and hand postures
- Use a different type of mouse at work and at home as variety creates a different position and decreases risk

Options to reduce risk of using mouse

- Change mouse clicking key (switch left and right click) in mouse settings
- Switch mouse to your non dominant hand – you can learn with other arm
- Have a range of devices which change your posture and break up small muscle use
- Mouse can be used in a variety of positions including in front of the keyboard or to the side
- Try using your mouse without a mouse pad

I have a sit stand desk. How long should I sit and stand?

Change regularly. Try standing for 10-15 minutes three times per day

What do you mean by change my position, I'm stuck here at the desk?

Have a range of positions, both seated and standing, for your chair, desk monitor and mouse

Is working on my laptop ok?

Yes, particularly if you incorporate many of these tips. If duration extends then external keyboards and monitors may be added to your setup

How often should I get up and move?

At the office: at least hourly

At home: every 30-45 minutes (yes more often)

Why more often at home?

Most people's setup is less ideal at home, so it is important to change working positions more frequently

Further Help

To get further help with the ergonomic setup at home, speak to your manager. They can get support and assistance for you.

Complete the Checklist

Please complete the *Working from Home Checklist* that can be found on the on the intranet with this guide or by clicking [here](#) and return to your manager