



HOME IS WHERE THE OFFICE IS

Ergonomics Where You Work

If you are telecommuting, it may be a new practice for you, or something you do frequently, it's important to continue to practice good ergonomics. Be careful with the temptations to sit in non-standard set-ups e.g., the bed, the coffee table or the couch using your laptop or taking phone calls. These habits may make you susceptible to ergonomic risks that aren't present in a typical office environment. Here are a few ways to improve your home office ergonomics:

1) Work Surface

Look for an optimal work surface. Choose home-based work location that emulates a desk. If you have a desk this is probably your best bet.

Leg room helps: Make sure that your workstation has ample leg space. Avoid working in front of cabinets or drawers. This will limit how close you can get to your computer and may cause awkward back and upper extremity postures.



2) Chair (Sitting)

Work surface too high? Use a taller chair or raise your seated position by placing a cushion on the seat. Feet positioning is important. Rest feet flat on the floor. If your feet are dangling use a footrest or a box to support the legs and feet.

If you are working on an alternate style chair, you can pad your chair as most kitchen and dining room chairs are not designed for prolonged sitting. Use a pillow to shorten the seat, a pillow or towel roll can also be used for lumbar support if using a deep couch.



3) Computer / Laptop

Keyboard Positioning: When using the keyboard, position the forearms parallel to the floor at a level where **elbows are at 90-120°**. The shoulders should be dropped and in a relaxed position.



Mouse Positioning: If using a mouse, position the **mouse at the same level as the keyboard** and close — avoid overreaching.



Keep the monitor approximately arm's length away. Approximately 18-30". Raise the top of your monitor to be **eye level with the top of the screen**.



If standing, wear comfortable shoes. Use a kitchen or yoga mat to **cushion your feet** and follow the above tips.



Low screen warning for laptop users! You might tend to position the screen too low, which can result in awkward neck postures. Raise your monitor by placing your laptop on a couple of books, or your tablet or a laptop stand. If you do this, make sure you are using a separate keyboard and mouse.



4) Lighting

Make sure you have good lighting. Open the blinds and turn on the lights to keep your workstation well-lit.

Working in a dim room will make it harder for you to read the notes you take on paper and can increase the contrast between your computer screen and the rest of your workstation.

Look at Monitor Positioning: Position your monitor or laptop screen at a 90-degree angle from the light source to avoid glare.

Good lighting can decrease errors as well as decrease eye-strain and the headaches, nausea, and neck pain which often accompany eye-strain.



5) Five-Minute Breaks

Micro-breaks throughout the day are key. Taking a micro-break can help you feel refreshed and ready to resume your work. Giving your body a break from prolonged and/or repetitive activities can help reduce your risk of injuries.

Take opportunities for water breaks. Remember to keep hydrated.

Rest your Eyes. Remember the 20-20-20 Rule: Every 20 minutes, look at least 20 feet to the distance for at least 20 seconds.



Additional Tips & Resources



Tips:

- Use boxes and books elevate the laptop to eye level
- Cushions, towels, and pillows provide additional support and raise you to proper seating height
- Use boxes, cushions, or reams of paper as a footrest to support your feet
- Avoid talking on the phone with the phone between the neck and ear. Use speakerphone.
- Keep the weight of your head directly above its base of support (neck)

Resources:

- The Computer Ergonomics Web-based tutorial is available via UC Learning Center. Complete the Computer Ergonomics Tier 1 Evaluation and Training e-Course on UC Learning Center. If using this resource, please note the link for ergonomic referrals is not currently active.
- Get Up Triton Subscribe Now is a stretching program sent to your inbox. Visit [UC San Diego Recreation e-mail video](#).

A note from Surplus Sales: If you're a UC San Diego department that needs access to Surplus Sales for critical support operations (e.g., computers/laptops, monitors, ergonomic furniture) in order to work from home, please email Surplus Sales to arrange an appointment. Contact svanduine@ucsd.edu & d2gomez@ucsd.edu. We apologize for the inconvenience, but we appreciate your understanding.