

Home working and staying healthy

Setting up your workspace

SCREENS should be positioned so that you do not have to twist or bend your neck to view them. They should be at a comfortable viewing distance and if you use multiple screens, angle them inwards towards you slightly.

Give your **EYES** a break. Every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds. 20-20-20.

FOREARMS should be horizontal when typing, with the shoulders relaxed. Adjust your chair height or use cushions to achieve this.

FEET should rest comfortably flat on the floor, or on a footrest if your seat height means your feet would not reach the floor.



Keep your **SHOULDERS** relaxed, they should not be hunched and the upper arm should not be raised away from the body significantly.

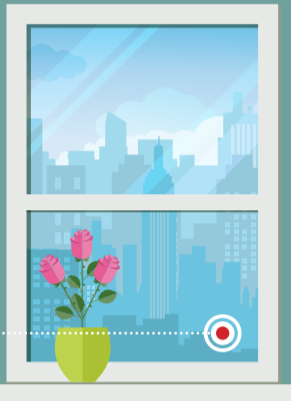
Position **MOUSE** and **KEYBOARD** about 10 to 15cm from the edge of the work surface, giving you space to part-rest your forearms when not typing.

Sit **BACK** taking full backrest support. Adjustable chairs are ideal. For more lumbar support, place a cushion or rolled up towel behind you.

Avoid having your **KNEES** higher than your hips - ideally they should be slightly lower with the **THIGHS** angled slightly down

Regular **MOVEMENT** is key. Get up from your chair 2-3 times an hour for 30-60 seconds or 5-10 minutes every hour. Add dynamic stretches to daily routines as well as walking.

Creating the right environment



We spend 90% of our time indoors so consider air quality. Let fresh air in, clean **WINDOWS** regularly to avoid dust build up and consider the cleaning products you are using. Air purifiers should be considered.

Observe the **TEMPERATURE** in your work area. When too cold, you may feel more distracted and lose some dexterity in your hands and fingers. If you are feeling cold, you may not be moving regularly enough. When you're too warm, you can be uncomfortable and tire more quickly. Aim for between 21 and 24°C (ideally 22°C).



ADD A LAMP to your desk to increase light levels if required. Illuminate the work area and documents as opposed to the screen as the screen already emits light.

Try to create a workspace away from your living space to reduce noise distraction. If you can't, wear earphones or headphones to take calls. Make sure these are fitted well. Adding **MUSIC** to the background or white noise can also help keep you productive.

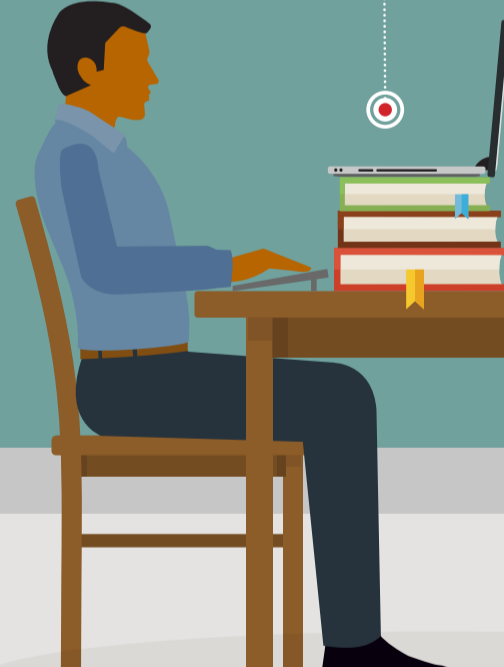
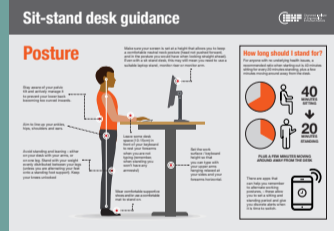
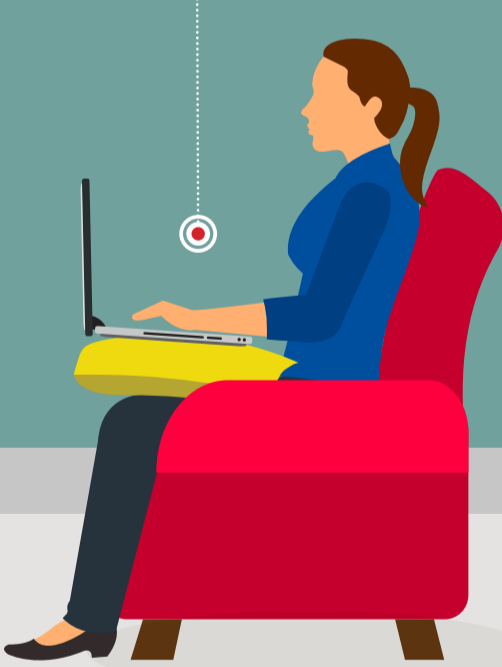
CREATE A GOOD ATMOSPHERE around your work area including natural light, plants, flowers and artwork. Increasing the connection to nature around your work area improves productivity.

Navigating your home

WORKING FROM A SOFA: Plant feet firmly on the floor and sit back in the seat. Put your laptop on a book / magazine on a cushion to raise the screen slightly and improve neck posture. Place a cushion behind you for better lower back support. Keep shoulders down and relaxed, elbows by your side and wrists straight. Take a break every 15-20 minutes.

INTERRUPT SITTING: For ad-hoc standing to work when you work directly on your laptop, a good regime could be 20 minutes sitting, eight minutes standing, two minutes moving. Avoid working directly on your laptop for prolonged periods whether sitting or standing.

WORKING AT A DINING TABLE: Plant feet firmly on the floor and sit back in the seat. Add a cushion to the backrest if needed. Move the chair close to the table and bring the laptop near to the edge. Try to lift the laptop to eye level and connect a separate keyboard and mouse to encourage a more neutral posture.



***These tips are offered on a temporary basis, when you do not have the means to set yourself up in an ideal ergonomic position.

Staying mentally fit

DON'T BE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF: You may be trying to work around childcare, home schooling, and other commitments. If you are struggling, talk to your line manager or HR department. If you are feeling anxious or low, there are a number of free apps that help support mental health wellbeing, e.g. Headspace, Moodfit. If you are finding everyday activities a struggle, contact your GP - many are now doing telephone or video consultations.

IF YOU ARE MISSING COLLEAGUES: Try to organise some regular 'get togethers' via conference call/apps. You may be 'seeing' each other during online work meetings but sometimes it's nice to have a chat over a cuppa, as you would during a coffee break in the office.



MAKE SURE YOU ARE GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP: You may be working different hours to fit in other commitments, but make sure you don't end up 'running on empty'. Set yourself boundaries and stick to them, e.g. no looking at emails between certain times of day/night, no working on weekends, etc., as applicable to your role.

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE SOME 'DOWN TIME': The lines between home and work are very blurred at the moment. Try to get outside for a period each day; the benefits of fresh air and being in nature are well documented in terms of mental health and wellbeing.

If you require further support, contact your manager and ask for a display screen equipment assessment (DSEA) which can be conducted remotely and support you with more specific advice.

www.ergonomics.org.uk