

Recommendations for Computer Use when Working at Home

In light of the recent pandemic, employees are now working from home for an extended period of time. While it's nice to be able to work from home, it is important to address ergonomic issues when working for prolonged periods at the computer. If you take a few steps to address the physical comfort of having a proper ergonomic set-up, you can avoid potential repetitive motion injuries and be more focused and productive.

Even though the couch, or even bed, would appear to be a comfortable place to sit while working, these locations often force you into awkward positions that can lead to unnecessary aches and pains, along with a decreased focus on the work at hand. Use what you have available to your advantage.

- At a desk or table, sit in your chair fully to obtain support, especially for your back. Add a few pillows for comfort if needed.
- Opt for a chair that allows your feet to be flat on the floor; if unable to do so, an empty box top or reams of paper can be used for foot support.
- If using a laptop, use a laptop stand (or even a few books) to raise the height of your screen help you to maintain an upright position rather than hunching over to look at the screen. Use an external keyboard and mouse to achieve the neutral (unbent) wrist position that is recommended.'
- Since your home computer set-up may still not be optimal, it is most important to take periodic breaks while working at the computer. Routinely look away from your monitor to give your eyes a rest, while doing some gentle stretches. In addition to these micro-breaks, stand up and move around every hour.
- While at home, you may find yourself using tablets and cell phones quite a bit; it is also important to remember proper ergonomics when using these devices to avoid 'cell phone slump.' Avoid tilting your head downward by raising the height of your tablet/phone.

Utilizing good ergonomic practices, and maintaining a regular routine as you would at the office, will help in the long run for productivity and overall well-being.

The following links provide helpful information while working from home:

Stretches: http://www.barbre-ergonomics.com/files/stretching_poster_12-2009.pdf.

Cell phone slump: <http://www1.udel.edu/ehs/generalhs/downloads/cell-phone-slump.pdf>

Workspace set-up video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8_ME4VwTiw