

Safety Spotlight

Ergonomics for the Home Office¹

Ergonomics is about improving your comfort, health, and productivity with thoughtful workplace design. There are some small changes you can make if you find yourself working from home unexpectedly to transform your space into a temporary office.

The Basics

Computer Monitor(s)

- Set the top of your monitor(s) at, or slightly below, eye level.
- Keep your neck straight, instead of craning or twisting.
- Position your monitor(s) about an arm's reach away.
- 20-20-20 Rule: Look 20 feet away every 20 minutes for 20 seconds.

Keyboard and Mouse

- Make sure your arms are close to your body, with elbows near your sides.
- Use an external keyboard and mouse, and place them close to your body.
- Keep your wrists straight by floating your hands above your keyboard when typing.

Chair

- Choose a chair with back support and sit so your back is fully supported, reclining slightly, if possible.
- Don't sit on a stool, couch, or exercise ball.

Work Surface

- Use a hard flat surface such as a table or desk.
- Remove clutter and any drawers directly in front of your seat
- If your shoulders aren't relaxed while working, try raising your seat or lowering your workstation.
- Keep your knees at 90 degrees, with feet flat on the floor.

Movement

- Sit for no more than 2 hours at a time.
- Stand for breaks, phone calls, or other non-computer tasks for up to 30 minutes at a time.
- Move often by changing positions and walking, when possible.



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¹ VelocityEHS. Ergonomics for the Home Office. 2020, https://www.humantech.com/special/2020/Ergonomics_Home_Office_Humantech.pdf.

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Productivity

- Routine is still important, including getting dressed for work.
- Breaks should be taken regularly, including a scheduled lunch.
- Engage with coworkers through group messaging or video chats periodically.

Environment

- Noise can be managed with noise-canceling headphones, or by listening to unfamiliar sounds or music in the background.
- Lighting should be bright overhead, and position your screen away from other light sources to limit glare.
- Air quality is improved by increasing ventilation with a fan or by keeping doors open.

Additional Quick Fixes

- Place an additional chair cushion on the seat for extra comfort or height.
- Use a box as a footrest to support your feet and legs.
- Use speakerphone or headphones with a microphone to take calls instead of holding the phone.
- Raise your monitor with an adjustable stand, laptop stand, or stack of books.
- If your monitor is too small, increase the zoom settings.
- If you only have a laptop, tilt the screen backwards to create more distance and use keyboard shortcuts to reduce trackpad use.
- Stand up and move more often if your home setup isn't ideal.



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