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Ergonomic self-assessment checklist: Home office

If you're suddenly forced to work remotely—in a home office—due to COVID-19, ergonomics may be the furthest thing from your mind. But it is important, so that you can work safely and comfortably. While you may not have the same chair and workstation options you have at home, you should still do what you can to maintain good posture and relieve strain. But what is good posture? Ideally, you'll use neutral body positioning, which is a comfortable working posture in which your joints are naturally aligned.

General

- Are items that you frequently use located close by?
- Are items positioned equally on both sides, i.e., not all on the dominant side of your body?

Chair

- Are feet resting flat on the floor, with hips slightly higher than knees?
- Does the chair fit the contour of your back? If you can, adjust the back rest up or down to fit the natural curve of your lower back with the curve of the chair.
- Is there a two-finger gap between the back of your lower legs and the seat of your chair? If possible, adjust the seat pan forward or backward to correctly fit it to the length of your legs.
- Are both chair arms at the same height to prevent you from leaning one way throughout the day?
- Can you use your keyboard and mouse without twisting or reaching? **Note:** If you can't get the keyboard or monitor low enough for your body type then raise your chair and use a footrest to obtain the ideal height for the chair, keyboard, and monitor.

Keyboard

- Is the keyboard close to elbow level to help keep the wrists straight? **Note:** Don't use high force to type on your keyboard as force can put strain on your muscles and ligaments.
- Is the mouse located right next to the keyboard so it can be operated without reaching?
- Can you move your mouse cursor from one end of your screen(s) to the other without picking it up? (Adjust mouse/pointer settings as needed in your software)

Computer monitor(s)

- Can you see the display of both monitors without looking downward or to either side?
- Does the distance from your monitor(s) to your eyes allow you to read the screen without leaning your head, neck, or trunk forward or backward?
- Is the monitor positioned so the top line of the screen is no higher than eye level? **Note:** If you wear bifocals and you feel like you're always looking down, you should adjust your monitors lower than the normal height to use the bifocal part of your glasses.

Varying positions

- When possible, do you make small adjustments to your chair or backrest to keep from staying in the same posture for long periods of time?
- Do you stretch your fingers, hands, arms, and torso throughout the day?
- Do you stand up and walk around for a few minutes periodically?
- Do you perform some of your tasks in a standing position? **Note:** When adjusting height of your desk or monitor, ensure it is on a sturdy surface with proper adjustment of your mouse also.

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