

# ERGONOMICS PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING FROM HOME DURING COVID-19

For more information, visit [coronavirus.dcj.nsw.gov.au](https://coronavirus.dcj.nsw.gov.au) or contact your local Work Health and Safety team member.



Employers and employees have a responsibility for health and safety in the workplace. This duty of care extends to remote work, such as work from home arrangements, so far as is reasonably practicable. For these work arrangements to be implemented effectively and safely there are proactive measures to address. Below is a checklist of ergonomic considerations for working from home during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic.

## 1 | FIND A DESIGNATED WORK AREA



**Noise**  
Where possible, find a quiet work area free from distraction.



**Environment**  
Ensure you have adequate lighting, access to natural light, an ambient temperature, good air quality and good ventilation.



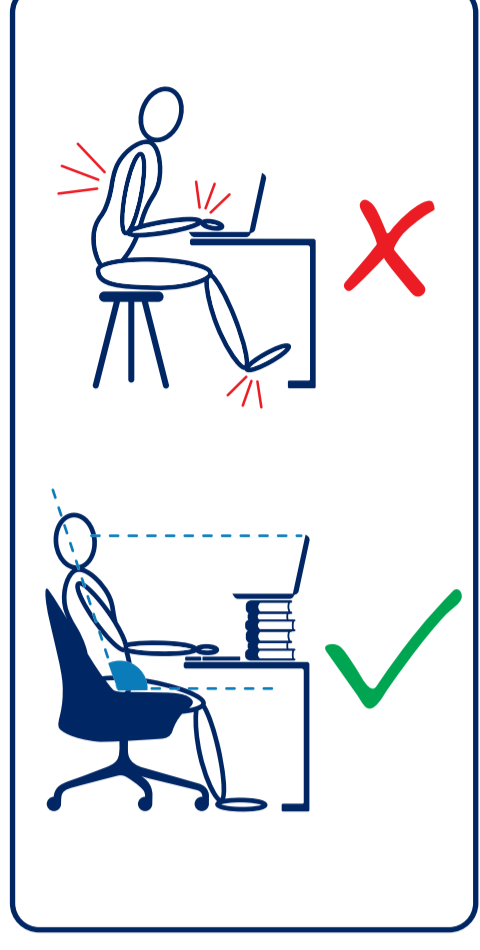
**Chair**  
Where possible, use a chair that has a back rest and enables you to lean back into the chair. Use a pillow or cushion to give extra comfort and support. The height should enable you to keep your feet grounded. Use a box or improvised foot rest to give extra comfort and support.



**Desk Height**  
Where possible, use a table or desk that is high/ low enough for your keyboard to be at elbow height. Use a pillow or cushion on the chair to give yourself extra height.



**Monitor**  
The height of the monitor should sit just below your eye level. If you are using a laptop, position your laptop on a stand or on something stable. Then use a separate keyboard and mouse.

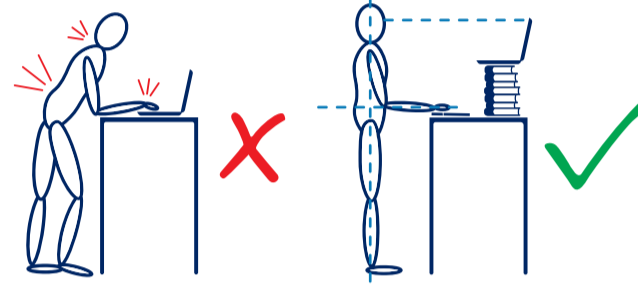


## 2 | BREAK UP YOUR DAY WITH DIFFERENT WORK AREAS

Aim to avoid sitting for more than an hour at a time. It is recommended that you interrupt sitting with an alternative working posture throughout the day.

**STANDING WITH LAPTOP:** recommended for short term use only

- 1 Raise your monitor closer to eye level – use something stable eg. books, box or tablet stand.
- 2 Use a separate keyboard and mouse.



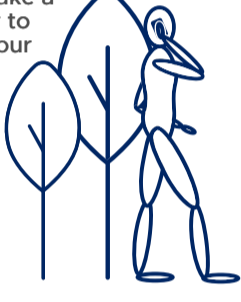
**SITTING WITH LAPTOP:** recommended for short term use only

- 1 Use a cushion to support your lower back and another to lift the laptop.
- 2 Keep your feet grounded. Use a box or improvised foot rest to give extra comfort and support.



**PHONE CONFERENCING**

A good time to stand up and stretch, or switch to audio only and take a walk. Remember to keep aware of your surroundings.



**SITTING AT A HIGH COUNTER:** recommended for short term use only

- 1 Use a cushion and/or tall chair to raise height.
- 2 Use a solid box or step stool to support feet.



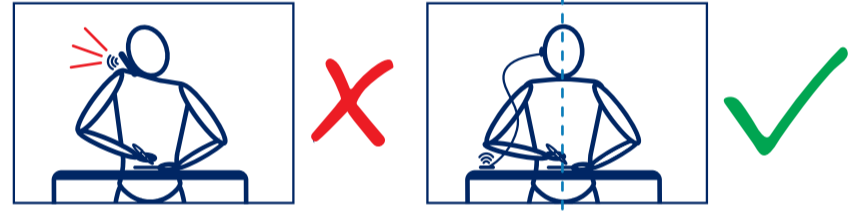
**PHONE SCREEN USE:** recommended for short term use only

Check your phone habits and avoid "texting thumb". Try holding the phone and using your finger to type and swipe instead.



**SPEAKING ON THE PHONE**

Use a good set of headphones whenever possible.



## 3 | KEEP ACTIVE

Find simple ways to incorporate regular movement and activity into your day.



**Seated Work**  
(approx. 30-60 min at a time)  
Best for high amounts of keying and when keyboard accuracy is important.



**Standing Work**  
(approx. 20-30 min at a time)  
Best for high concentration tasks, posture break from sitting and conference calls.



**Breakout Work**  
Best for reading documents, making calls and taking a break from screens.

Take breaks regularly throughout the day.



Try and take a walk or get some fresh air during the day. Exercise and daylight are good for your mental health as well as physical health.



Find a quiet space away from your workspace – just taking yourself away from an environment can be significantly beneficial.



Have your tea break away from your designated work space and recharge.

Being active and changing your posture has many potential benefits for your wellbeing.



Prevents musculoskeletal problems.



Reduces risk of heart conditions.



Increases metabolism.



Improves concentration.



Better sleep.

## 4 | WORK PRACTICES



Set a routine and stick with it.



Encourage good communication with your work colleagues.



Establish boundaries around your work hours and office/ area with your partner, children and/ or house mates, as appropriate.



Focus – write a list of what needs to be done; then prioritise.



Limit social media, visits to the fridge and other distractions until scheduled break times. Reward yourself for time well spent.

## 5 | WELLNESS IN ACTION

Taking action, however small, can improve your wellness while working from home and prevent stress developing in the first place. A change of attitude, expectations and/ or communication styles is a great proactive approach.



Be clear – clarify expectations of yourself and others. Speak up if you feel that you can't take on extra demands.



Be realistic – we're all human and don't have to be perfect all the time.



Be proactive – take advantage of opportunities where you can provide input. This is valuable when there are decisions that may impact you.



Be open, talk to someone you trust. Talk about what makes you feel stressed. What do we have the power to change?



Say if you need help – talk to your manager, family or EAP.

Encourage employees to reach out for health and wellbeing support:

- Former Family and Community Services employees can call Converge on 1300 687 327
- Former Justice employees can call Benestar on 1300 360 364.

## 6 | WHAT TO DO IF YOU FEEL DISCOMFORT



Check your workstation and your posture again. See Sect 1 & 2 above.



Take breaks regularly to ensure changes in posture throughout the day. See Sect 1 & 2 above.



Report any issues or concerns to your manager.



Reach out to your local WHS team member for ergonomic assistance and advice.



If discomfort persists, please seek appropriate medical advice.