

QUICK TIPS

Home Office Ergonomics
& Physical Wellness

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With at-home work at an all-time high and many people adapting to non-traditional office settings, the importance of a proper workspace setup has become more essential than ever. Ergonomics refers to designing a job to fit the individual, so the work is safer and more efficient. If your body is stressed by an awkward posture, extreme temperatures or repeated movement, your musculoskeletal system is affected. You may experience fatigue, discomfort and pain, which can be some of the first signs of a musculoskeletal disorder – conditions that affect your muscles, joints, tendons, ligaments and nerves. These disorders can develop quickly or over time.

Implementing ergonomic solutions can make you more comfortable, reduce muscle strain, and increase productivity.

In this short guide, we'll outline a few simple tips and pointers for adjusting your home office to be more ergonomically friendly along with some easy stretching exercises to improve flexibility and mobility.

ADJUST YOUR CHAIR

A correctly adjusted office chair will assure your back is properly supported. Choose a chair that's easily adjustable so that you can change the height, back position and tilt. Small adjustments can make big differences, reduce muscle strain and result in greater productivity.

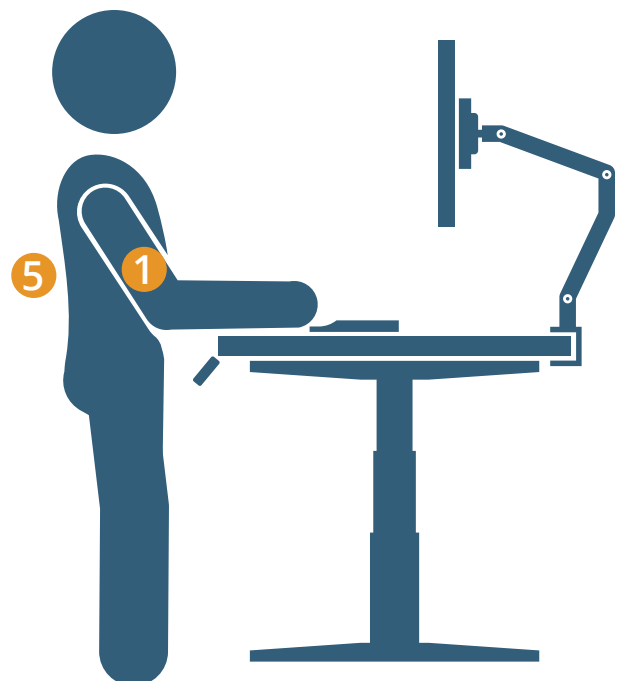
- 1 Stand in front of the chair. Adjust the height so the highest point of the seat is just below your kneecap.
- 2 Sit so a clenched fist fits between the front edge of the seat and the lower part of your legs.
- 3 Adjust the backrest of the chair so it supports the hollow in your lower back.
- 4 Determine elbow height by relaxing your shoulders with your arms at your sides. Adjust the work surface height to your elbow height so your forearms are parallel with the floor. If using a fixed height work surface, raise your chair to get the proper arm and upper body position. Adjust the chair height so your elbows are about the same height as the work surface. Keep arm rests slightly below elbow height and only use for periodic resting.
- 5 Incorporate a footrest if needed to support your legs.



WORK/DESK AREA SET-UP

Having a well-designed workspace, proper posture and small physical adjustments can help decrease fatigue and overuse of certain muscle groups.

- 1** First, adjust your chair and sit up straight. When you are sitting in your chair the work surface should be level with your elbow. If standing, the elbow should be slightly higher than the work surface.
- 2** Adjust your computer's keyboard and mouse tray to ensure your elbows are bent at an "L" shape, your wrists are straight, and your shoulders are relaxed.
- 3** The monitor should be 18 to 24 inches (roughly an arm's length) directly in front of you, not at an angle. The top edge of the screen should be at, or slightly below, eye level. Position your primary monitor directly in front of you. Keep your monitor flat and perpendicular to the work surface to reduce glare from ceiling lights.
- 4** Place all frequently used items as close as possible (approximately 18-21 inches) to eliminate over reaching.
- 5** When standing, avoid bending forward. Maintain a neutral posture by keeping your ears, shoulders and hips in a straight line.
- 6** Give your eyes a rest. Every 20 minutes look at an object 20 feet or more away for 20 seconds.



CARPAL TUNNEL EXERCISES

Carpal tunnel syndrome causes pain, tingling, and numbness in your hand from pressure on the median nerve in your wrist. It's often caused by repetitive motions, so some simple exercises can help prevent this serious condition.

1



Stand with your arms relaxed and at your side.

2



Lift your right arm out in front to shoulder level, palm of hand facing up. Spread fingers and bend wrist until fingers point to the floor.

3



Bring your fingers and wrist up, forming a tight fist. Flex your wrist toward you.

4



Bend your elbow pulling your fist toward the shoulder.

5



Rotate your arm out towards the side, your arm still bent, and fist held. Turn your head toward the fist.

6



Straighten your elbows and fingers. Bend wrist, pointing your fingers toward the floor. Slowly turn your head toward your opposite shoulder. Repeat with the left side of your body.

7



Bring both arms up to shoulder level and push back of your wrists together, fingers pointing down toward the floor. Pull shoulders back.

8



Bring your hands up into a prayer position and push palms and shoulders inward.

9



Keeping palms together, raise your hands above your head.

10



Bring hands back behind your head, pulling shoulders back.

11



Stretch both arms out to the side to shoulder level, bending your wrists down and fingers in a fist.

12



Straighten your fingers, bring arms down by your side and then back behind you. Wrist bent up. Stretch chin up. Release your hands to your side and shake out your hands.

DAILY STRETCHING EXERCISES



Tall Stretch

Tall Stretch

Interlock your fingers, palms up. Stretch arms above your head until they are straight. Do not arch the back.

Toe-In, Toe-Out

Place feet shoulder-width apart, heels on the floor. Swing toes in, then out.

Shoulder Roll

Roll the shoulders. Raise them, pull them back, then drop them and relax. Repeat in the opposite direction.

Side Stretch

Drop left shoulder, reaching left hand towards the floor. Return to starting position. Repeat on right side.



Side Stretch

Back Curl

Grasp your shin, lift leg off floor. Bend forward (curling the back) reaching nose toward the knee.

Ankle Flex and Stretch

Hold one foot off the floor, leg straight. Alternately flex ankle (pointing toes up) and extend (pointing toes toward the floor). Repeat with the other leg.

Leg Lift

Sit forward on chair so your back is not touching the chair's back. Place feet flat on the floor. With a straight leg, lift one foot a few inches off the floor. Hold momentarily, return it to the floor and repeat with the other leg.



Wrist Extensor Stretch

Finger and Wrist Extensor Stretch

Straighten your elbow with palm up. Point fingers to the floor and use your other hand to gently pull down on palm and fingers for 10-15 seconds. You should feel a mild pulling sensation.

Hamstring Stretch

Place heel on ground in front of you with knee straight. Keeping your back straight, look up at the ceiling and bend forward at your hips for 10-15 seconds. You should feel a mild pulling sensation.



Hamstring Stretch

Low Back Flexor Stretch

Place your hands on your hips and gently lean back until you feel a mild pulling sensation. Hold this position for 10-15 seconds.

GOOD POSTURE

Sitting and standing with proper alignment improves blood flow, helps keep your nerves and blood vessels healthy, and supports your muscles, ligaments and tendons. People who use correct posture are often less likely to experience related back and neck pain.



1

Stand up straight with your shoulders back (not rounded forward). Your neck should be straight, so your ears are directly over your shoulders. Your weight is equally supported on both feet, so hips are level. Keep your knees slightly bent, not locked. Your feet should be under your shoulders with toes pointing forward. Maintain the natural curves of the spine or your “neutral” position.



2

Find the “neutral” position of your spine. Tilt your pelvis to create an arch in your lower back or a swayback position.



3

Flatten the lower back by tightening your stomach muscles, pulling your stomach in like you’re pressing your belly button towards your back.



4

Move back and forth between position 1 and position 2 until you find a place between these two extremes where your back feels balanced and most comfortable. This is your “neutral” position.



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