

Ergonomic tips for working at home

Introduction

With the COVID-19 outbreak, many employees are working from home for the first time. Follow these recommendations when setting up your home office with the proper ergonomics in mind.

Posture

Do your best to find a chair that supports your back, and positions you with at least a 90-degree angle at your hips. If available, utilize a table surface allowing for a 90-degree angle at your elbows. Reference SFM's Ergonomic Workstation Education handout for ideal positioning, while keeping in mind that the transition to working at home is temporary, and we will need to do the best we can with what we have available.

Laptops

If you are using a laptop, be aware that because the screen and keyboard are attached, extended use is a postural tradeoff between neck/head posture, and hand/wrist posture.

- Laptop recommendations:
- Find a comfortable chair that supports your back
- Monitor your hand/wrist posture and height
- Angle the laptop screen allowing for optimal viewing with your neck in as neutral alignment as possible
- Use a separate keyboard, mouse and monitor, if available
- Plan for frequent positional changes and postural breaks to allow for muscle recovery

Phone

- Continue using your headset if you are using an office phone at home
- If you are using a mobile phone, use the speaker phone option for extended phone calls

Activity and stretching breaks

- Activity and posture breaks are key to maximizing comfort during your temporary transition to working at home. Be sure to implement frequent postural breaks and stretching.
- Refer to the "Get Up & Move" stretches and stretch multiple times per day
- This is a great opportunity to increase the exercise you incorporate into your day. Remember that exercise is cumulative, and three 10-minute walks are as beneficial as one 30-minute walk.

Environmental considerations

- Ensure the area surrounding your home workspace is free from clutter and tripping hazards
- Evaluate for adequate lighting and position screens/monitors to minimize glare
- Take noise and privacy concerns into consideration

