

## Working from Home - Ergonomics

In order to reduce social contact, many people have transitioned to online education or working from home. While it may be tempting to recline in an easy chair with a laptop, or hunch over a coffee table, these workstations are not ergonomically correct and can cause musculoskeletal injury! Here are some tips to assist you with optimizing your home workspace.

### Computer/Monitor:

Laptops - suitable for light administrative tasks, however, they are generally not designed for long term use or heavy keyboarding since they cause the user to angle their neck downward. If available, consider attaching an external monitor, keyboard, and mouse to make a workstation more "ergo friendly". Contact your school systems IT department for more specifics.

- Your neck should be in an upright position with the screen at or slightly below eye level.
- The monitor should be at least 18" from your eyes, directly in front of you.
- Keep your elbows at the sides of the body and at a right angle to the keyboard.
- Keep your wrists in a straight or neutral position to avoid stressors on the carpal tunnel.
- Avoid excessive force such as gripping the mouse too tightly or typing in the same position for too long.
- Keep things within reach, avoid hyperextending and repetitive twisting.

Tip—If you don't have a work surface that is the correct height, you can use things like stacks of books, cardboard boxes, reams of paper to raise monitor until it is at the correct level.

### Chair Selection:

- Feet should be able to lie flat on the floor.
- You should be able to sit with back straight (not overly stuffed or designed for reclining such as an easy chair).
- Preferably adjustable, if not cushions/pillows can be used to increase height/give lumbar support.

### Breaks and Stretches:

- It is recommended to take a brief (5 minute) break every hour in order to [stretch](#), stand up, and walk around in order to increase circulation and decrease muscle fatigue.

### Signs and Symptoms:

- You may have an ergonomics problem if you experience any of the following: Tingling, numbness, aching, swelling and/or decreased range of motion. If you do: stop, take a break, stretch, and adjust your work station. If the symptoms persist, contact your supervisor or the school system's occupational health provider.

*\*Bonus Tip— In order to make it easier to focus on work (and to relax afterward), try to designate separate locations in your home for work and recreation/relaxation. Studies have shown that physical separation also helps with mental separation!*



## For More Information:

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