

So You Now Work From Home...

Tips for your mental and physical health:



1. Try to maintain a regular morning routine

- ▶ Although it may be tempting to roll out of bed and stumble straight to your computer in your pyjamas, it's best to differentiate between your home life and work life.
- ▶ You don't need to keep all of your routine – decide which elements will work best for you.
- ▶ **Suggestions:** Give yourself a “commute” by taking a walk or bike ride, do a morning home workout like yoga or circuit training, meditate outside for 10-15 minutes...

2. Communicate with your colleagues by video chat if possible

- ▶ Even if you can't connect face-to-face in person, chatting face-to-face through a screen can still help you feel connected and reduce loneliness.

3. Schedule breaks into your day

- ▶ When working at home without regular social cues or interruptions, it's easy to forget to take breaks.
- ▶ Consider using a timer, Microsoft Outlook Calendar reminders, an activity monitor watch, or an hourglass to prompt you to take your breaks!
- ▶ Try to follow the “20-20-20 rule” for eye breaks.
- ▶ Micro-breaks to stand up and move at least 1 time per hour are recommended.

The 20-20-20 Rule

Reducing risk of eyestrain, dryness, and headaches



Every 20 minutes...

...take a 20sec break from the screen...

...& focus on an object >20' away.

Hunching over a laptop is not recommended!



Hunching over a laptop with arms elevated

When properly adjusted, the top of your screen should be at eye level and the keyboard/mouse should be in line with your 90° elbow height (wrists flat)




- ★ Your elbows and eyes are probably about 20”-22” apart; however your laptop keyboard and monitor are probably only 10” apart... this means you will likely be hunching your upper-body down and elevating your arms while working.
- ★ Awkward postures working at a laptop could contribute to discomfort in the back, shoulders, neck, hands, wrists, forearms, and elbows.
- ★ To maintain a neutral, upright posture the screen and the laptop should be split apart – see the following pages for suggested solutions to creating a home office set-up.

Home Office Troubleshooting Guide

Symptom	Possible cause	Suggested solutions
Sore low-back	Lack of adequate backrest support, resulting in non-neutral postures such as slouching, hunching, or “perching” on the front edge of your seat.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure the seat of the chair is not too deep for you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There should be around 2 fingers of space between the front edge of the seat and the backs of your knees when your back is touching the backrest. Contact stress from the edge of the seat on the backs of your knees may reduce circulation in the legs or promote bad postures. Ensure you have adequate back support when seated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add a cushion to the backrest of your chair. Add a rolled towel or a lumbar roll cushion in the inward curve of your low-back.



Neutral versus hunched seated posture

Symptom	Possible cause	Suggested solutions
Sore upper-back or neck	Hunching down to view your screen.	<p>1. Consider procuring an external monitor to be adjusted to the correct height.</p>  <p><i>External monitor</i></p> <p>or</p> <p>2. Consider procuring an external keyboard and mouse so that your laptop/tablet screen can be elevated on top of a riser or a box.</p>  <p><i>External kb/mouse + laptop riser</i></p> <p><i>*Please ensure that your employer allows you to connect external devices to your work computer.</i></p>
Tension in the shoulders	Elevating the arms due to the keyboard and mouse being too high.	<p>1. Try to find a table or desk that aligns with your 90° elbow height with wrists flat and feet supported on the floor. (Most home desks and dining room tables are too high.)</p> <p>2. If this is not possible, consider raising your chair to create a neutral alignment in your upper body and then put a stable box, book, or footrest on the floor to support your feet.</p> <p>3. Consider purchasing a keyboard tray that can clamp onto your existing table or desk surface. Many models are available.</p>  <p><i>Clamping kb tray</i></p>

Symptom	Possible cause	Suggested solutions
Discomfort in the wrists	Contact stress from the edge of the desk or table on the undersides of the wrists or Awkward wrist angle due to inappropriate keyboard/mouse height.	- See section above for suggested solutions on how to achieve the correct keyboard/mouse height.
Discomfort in the arms or elbows	Overly- flexed elbow position due to keyboard/mouse being at the inappropriate height.	- Elbows should be flexed at 90° with shoulders relaxed and wrists flat. - See section above for suggested solutions on how to achieve the correct keyboard/mouse height.
Discomfort in the hands	Working using the laptop or tablet's overly small keyboard and/or touchpad.	- Consider procuring an external keyboard and mouse that is an appropriate size. <i>*Please ensure that your employer allows you to connect external devices.</i>

Don't sweat it if your home office set-up isn't perfect!

Many people find they vary their positions more often when working from home

- ★ Even if none of the positions you work in are “ergonomically correct”, at least they are a variety of different incorrect positions! This will reduce the amount of repetitive strain in your body.
- ★ Oftentimes people will alternate between sitting at their desk, slouching on the sofa, sitting at the dining room table, or standing at the island in the kitchen.
- ★ Please ensure that you seek help from a health professional if you have significant discomfort.
- ★ Remember to perform appropriate stretches throughout the day. Some examples are shown below; however these are general examples and should not be performed if they aggravate your symptoms.



Chin tuck



Standing lumbar extension



Doorway chest stretch



Forearm, wrist, and hand stretches