

Working from Home

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced millions of Americans to work remotely from their homes, but not everyone is set up with a proper home office. In addition to regularly and thoroughly sanitizing your work area and office components, your home office should be set up using the same basic ergonomics principles as a work office. These recommendations are provided to assist you in increasing your comfort while using your laptop or computer at home.

✓ Use an area of your home that allows productive work

Consider your comfort and the work you regularly complete when choosing a location. The work surface should be close to your elbow height with elbows bent 90°. This allows typing, mousing, and writing with less contact stress on the edge of the work surface. A large and wide workspace allows placement of all necessary equipment and documents, which improves productivity.

✓ Sit in a chair that is comfortable and adjustable

For short stints, a dining room chair or wooden chair will provide comfort, but the lack of padding and lumbar support can lead to significant discomfort over time. If you want to add some lumbar support, roll a towel and place it between your chair and lower back.

Adjustable office chairs are highly preferable to dining room chairs and stools as they allow customized support. When using a chair your feet should be firmly supported by the floor or footrest. **Adjustable or removable armrests** allow easier movement under surfaces.



✓ Use an external keyboard and mouse for your laptop

Using a laptop keyboard throughout the day forces hunched postures. **External keyboards and full size mice** allow you to position the laptop screen away from the input devices and sit upright. Your mouse should be located next to the keyboard and at the same height. Use full-sized equipment designed for comfortable, long-term usage (eight hours per day). If you have regular wrist discomfort, consider vertical mice or curved keyboards. **Avoid** small-sized travel keyboards and travel mice; they are designed for very short-term usage.



✓ Raise monitors to eye level after purchasing keyboard and mouse

Stack books or purchase a monitor / laptop stand to raise your laptop and other monitors so the top pixel is at your eye level. If paper documents are frequently referenced, consider purchasing a document holder to raise papers closer to eye level.

✓ Take frequent breaks to stretch and relax muscles

Take breaks at least hourly to stand up and stretch. Get up and walk around, or do some quick stretches at your desk. If you stand while working, sit during your breaks. If using a non-office-style chair or a laptop with out external input devices, take breaks more frequently.

When adjusting or purchasing equipment, consult our [Seated Office Workstation](#), [Standing Office Workstation](#), and [Office Chair Adjustments](#) documents. For a virtual personalized office evaluation, call The Ergonomics Center at 919-515-2052 or email McNierne@NCSU.edu for more information.



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