

# Ergonomics Tips for Working at Home

Consider these concepts and tips for creating more effective workspaces at home.

## Risk Factors



Listen to your body; computer work should not be uncomfortable. If it is, one or more of these risk factors may be at play. Try to reduce or eliminate these risks:

- Awkward Postures - may include rounded or twisted spine, craned neck, deviated shoulder or wrist
- Muscle Tension - common causes: sitting upright without back support, leaning forward when viewing screen, reaching awkwardly for or gripping the mouse
- Repetitive Motion - intensive data entry, mouse scrolling, scanning
- Contact Stress - body tissue compression from hard surfaces. Examples include sitting, standing, wrists on edge of desk
- Environmental - not a direct cause of injury in computer work, but certainly impacts health and productivity. Physical factors may include lighting, glare, noise, air quality/temperature. Also includes psychosocial factors like distractions, pace of work, changes in circumstances, etc.

## Good Seated Posture

At home, prioritize comfortable seated workstations.

- Your back should be slightly reclined and fully supported, joint angles slightly open (greater than 90 degrees), legs/feet supported.
- The keyboard/mouse should be positioned roughly at elbow height so the wrists are neutral.
- The computer screen should be positioned for viewing with a comfortable neck posture while sitting back in the chair.

The images below depict several ways to achieve a comfortable seated posture. Be creative and change positions/locations frequently.



Tip:  
Focus on being supported and relaxed rather than achieving “perfect posture”.

## Good Standing Posture

Standing is not the preferred default posture. Instead, think of it as a good way to change positions and interrupt prolonged sitting. Standing work should be limited to about 15 minutes at a time. Ideally, keyboard and mouse will be at elbow height and the top of screen at eye height. If not quite right, it's OK. Recognize the problem (i.e. screen too low), listen to your body and change positions when you start to feel it.



Tip: Using a separate keyboard and mouse and elevating the laptop screen improves neck postures.

## Workstation Planner

Visit this site for a visual planner to help estimate proper furniture and surface heights for you. it can also be helpful to have a family member take pictures or help you measure. This is not a product endorsement, simply an informational tool. Ergonomics consultation is recommended to select adjustable furniture.

The screenshot shows the Ergotron Workstation Planner website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with "ergotron" logo, "MY LIST", and "UNITED STATES / ENGLISH". Below the navigation bar, there are tabs for "MARKETS", "SUPPORT", "TOOLS", and "COMPANY". The main content area is titled "1) Click your height" and features a height selection tool with a dropdown menu showing heights from 5'0" to 6'4". Below this, there is a section titled "2) Note values displayed below - Printable Worksheet PDF" which contains two ergonomic diagrams. The left diagram shows a person sitting at a desk with a laptop, and the right diagram shows a person standing at a desk with a laptop on a stand. The diagrams include the following measurements: Your Height (66"), Monitor Height (47" for sitting, 63" for standing), Keyboard Height (26" for sitting, 43" for standing), and Sit-Stand Adjustment (17"). The diagrams also indicate a 20°-30° tilt for the screen and a 10°-20° tilt for the keyboard. At the bottom, there is a section titled "3) Install and adjust workstation components to within an inch of values".

## Manage Eyestrain

- Control natural lighting
- Avoid screen glare
- Monitor position
  - Distance - arms' length
  - Height - eyes level with top of screen
  - Multifocal/Progressive lenses? - try lowering screen to avoid extending your neck
- Monitor settings - reduce brightness, enlarge applications
- Recovery - 20/20/20 Rule - every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds

## Recovery

Frequent position changes and movement will prevent discomfort and sustain productivity. Take advantage of the opportunities working from home can offer!

- Change positions and locations
- Take breaks
  - Micro breaks every 20-30 minutes
  - Longer breaks every hour—GET MOVING!
  - 20/20/20 visual breaks
- Use Cornell resources:
  - Human Resources
  - Environmental Health and Safety
  - Physical Therapy
  - Wellness
  - [CU Ergo](#) (Cornell University Ergonomics Web)

## Contact Us

Please reach out if you have any questions about your home workstation.

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Schedule a virtual assessment.

If you would like to schedule a phone or video consultation to review photos/video of your work spaces please email Mary Schiavone at [office@ebd-ot.com](mailto:office@ebd-ot.com)

