

Working from home

Display screen equipment guidance



Introduction

We recognise that staff will need to work from home and use their company laptop when working from home during the current Covid-19 pandemic and this may not afford the same benefits including ergonomic design of their workstations when working at the company premises.

The guidance and principles listed below gives general guidance on how to set up your workstation at home and will need to be adapted to suit each individual home working environment.

Employees should make full use of the equipment including tables and chairs you already have and use in your home, you may already have a home office or a place where you use your own personal computer or laptop, and this may need to be adjusted to get the best from it and to avoid potential health problems.

Due to the recent UK Government advice and the recommendation that office workers should work from home if they can and it is safe to do so without adversely affecting their wellbeing, then our employees who are working from home will need to follow the guidance below and complete the homeworkers display screen equipment (DSE) self-assessment form (which is supplied separately) and return to their line manager.

It should be noted that working from home requires flexibility from both the employee and employer and as such each individual situation will need to be assessed on a case by case basis including advice and any additional support or equipment required by the employee in order to fulfil their role safely whilst working from home.

If it is not deemed possible after the completion of the homeworkers DSE self-assessment form for the employee to work safely from home and without adverse risk to their wellbeing, then the company reserves the right to refuse employees to work from home and they may be required to work in the office or their normal place of work.

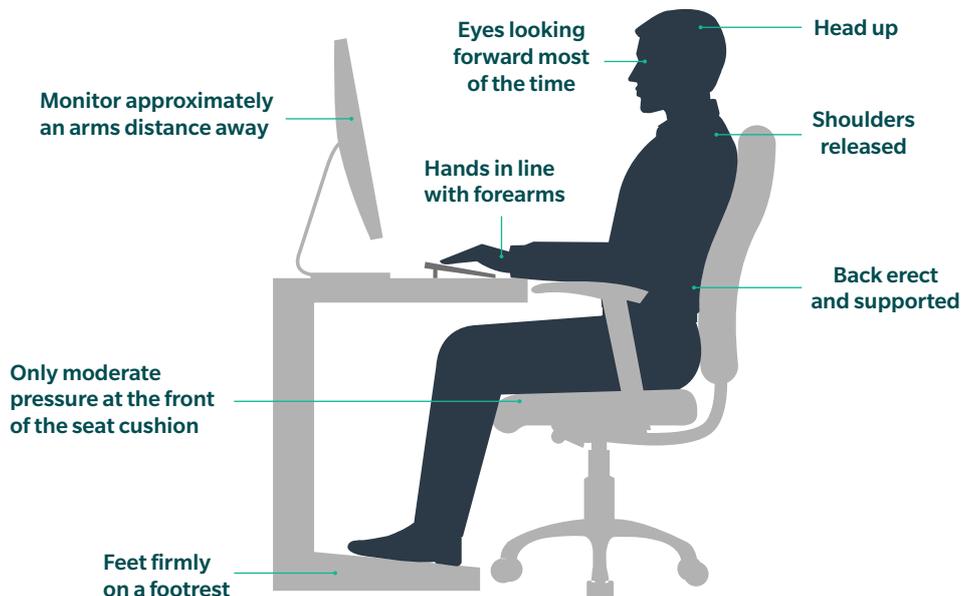
Ergonomics at home

If you are going to be working from home including on a temporary basis during the Covid-19 pandemic it is advisable that you should use a separate keyboard and mouse as well as a laptop stand if you have been provided with one by the company. Using these peripheral devices along with other regular household items will help you to maintain neutral postures while working from home – reducing the risk of developing discomfort or injury.

Sit at a desk or a table when using your laptop rather than on the sofa. Seated height will need to be adjusted based on the table or desk height. Note that dining tables are generally higher than standard desktops.

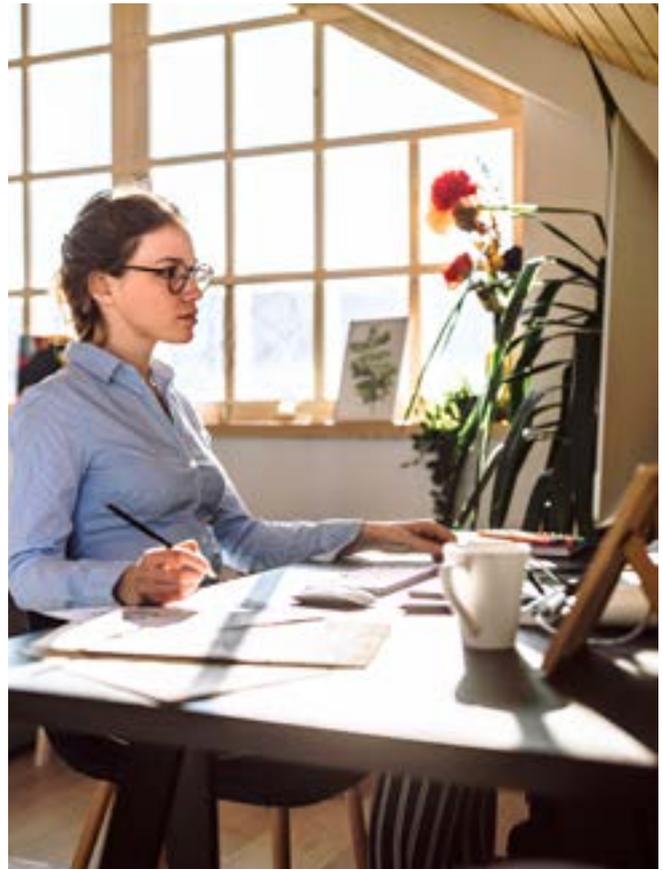
Select a chair that has a high backrest to support your back. Depending on the height of your table or desk, you might need to use pillows or cushions to raise your seated height and/or to support your lower back. If your feet do not comfortably reach the floor use books or other sturdy items as a footrest.

With the keyboard and mouse on the edge of the table or desk, your upper back and shoulders should remain down/relaxed, elbows bent to 90 degree angles and forearms parallel to the floor/desktop. Additionally, feet must be supported with thighs parallel to the floor or with knees slightly lower than the hips.



Workstation adjustments

- Adjust your chair and laptop to find the most comfortable position for your work. As a broad guide, your forearms should be approximately horizontal and your eyes the same height as the top of the laptop, you may need to raise your laptop to achieve this.
- Make sure you have enough work space surrounding your laptop and avoid clutter. If you have a wireless mouse and keyboard, then this should be used.
- Arrange your desk/ area where you use your laptop to avoid glare, or bright reflections on the screen. This will be easiest if neither you nor the screen is directly facing windows or bright lights. Adjust curtains or blinds to prevent unwanted light.
- Make sure there is space under your desk/ area to move your legs freely. Move any obstacles such as boxes or equipment. Avoid excess pressure from the edge of your seat on the backs of your legs and knees.
- Try to keep your wrists straight when keying. Keep a soft touch on the keys and don't overstretch your fingers. Good keyboard technique is important.
- If you have a mouse, then position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with the wrist straight. Sit upright and close to the desk, so you don't have to work with your mouse arm stretched. Move the keyboard out of the way if it is not being used.
- Support your forearm on the desk/work area, and don't grip the mouse too tightly. Rest your fingers lightly on the buttons and do not press them hard.
- In setting up software, choose options giving text that is large enough to read easily on your screen, when you are sitting in a normal, comfortable working position. Select colours that are easy on the eye (avoid red text on a blue background, or vice-versa).
- Don't sit in the same position for long periods. Make sure you change your posture as often as practicable. You may wish to stand up and use the laptop for short periods of time or take a comfort break.
- Most importantly if you begin to suffer any discomfort or lower back pain, then take a break and take regular breaks when working from home, if the discomfort or pain continues, then you should stop work and speak to your line manager.



Avoid

- Using phones or tablets for long periods of time
- Sitting on unsupportive seating such as sofas
- Static postures

Whilst it may seem easier to simply open your laptop and start working without making any adjustments, this can lead to poor posture, which can cause pain or discomfort over time. It is well worth taking a couple of minutes to take a couple of minutes to set up your workstation correctly each time you sit down.

Make sure you take regular breaks from DSE work in order to change your posture.

Backing you to succeed with refreshingly human advice and support

For further details and information on working safely with display screen equipment see: hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/

The information contained herein is based on sources we believe reliable and should be understood to be general insurance and risk management information only. The information is not intended to be taken as advice and cannot be relied upon as such.

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