



Tips for Setting Up Your Home Work Space



Location, Location, Location

Where you set up your home office space matters. Designate a specific place for work to help you maintain a work/life balance. If possible, a room with a door so you can leave your work behind at the end of the day.

Cabin fever might have you rearranging all of your furniture, but be consistent with where your designated work space is located. Once you start thinking you can work from bed, it's all over.



Where's my desk?

One of the most important steps in selecting the right location is to find the right surface height to sit at when performing much of your work. Your elbows should be at a 90-degree angle with shoulders relaxed. Kitchen tables are typically higher than you want, which could hurt your shoulders or neck. If your forearms are elevated, it could cause circulation issues or numbness.

The best solution, of course, is a desk that is adjusted to the correct height for you, or even a card table which tends to sit a little lower.



Don't glare at me

If you have a window in your space, avoid directly facing it where you'll get glare. Sit perpendicular to the window, or close the blinds. If you're working in a basement, consider using task lighting angled behind your screen to avoid a stark difference. You don't want too much light or glare, or not enough light.



Choose your chair wisely.

The best solution is to get an office chair with adjustable height, tilt, and backrest. If you have to use your regular dining room chair, follow these additional tips to ensure your seating position is at the proper height and you are properly supported.

Put a pillow on your seat.

Placing a thin pillow underneath your seat can go a long way to making an ordinary chair a lot more comfortable. If you don't have a pillow, you could also fold up a fluffy towel for the same effect.

Draping a soft towel over the back of your chair is also a small thing that can make your chair feel softer.

Add a rolled towel for lumbar support.

If you're someone who struggles with lower back pain, lumbar support pillows that rest on the back of your pelvis have been shown to increase comfort while seated. You don't need to buy a fancy pillow to accomplish this effect; roll a towel and placing it between your chair and lower back.

Put your feet up

Supporting your feet on an elevated surface - a phone book, step stool, etc. - if they don't firmly touch the ground while sitting, or stretching your legs long to increase circulation. Ideally, your hips and thighs should form 90-degree angles when you sit in your chair, but you can move your feet back and forth for exercise.



Monitor your monitor.

Where you set up Your monitor (or laptop screen) height should be set up so that your line of sight is within the top third of the screen. If your screen is too low and you don't have access to a monitor stand, use books or a ream of paper to elevate the screen.



Using a laptop.

Even though it is named a laptop, the general rule is not to put your laptop directly on your lap while working. It gives off heat and the position it forces your body into postures that put you at higher risk of an ergonomic injury. The screen is either going to be too low or the keyboard is going to be too high.

The top third of your screen should within your natural line of sight, so you don't have to strain your neck to read. If you're working on a reading-intensive task, prop your laptop up on objects (like a stack of books or shoeboxes) so it's eye-level. When you need to type, lower it to a level that allows your arms to be bent at 90-degree angles.

Ideally, use an external keyboard and mouse and raise the laptop so that the screen is at the appropriate height for reading.



Change your posture ... a lot.

Maintaining a single posture all day long is unsafe. It's crucial that you vary your posture throughout the day, because sitting in the same position or chair all day can lead to back, neck and shoulder pain. For example, you might start your day at your kitchen table, then transition to a standing position or sit on your couch for a short period of time. It's best to alternate your postures regularly.



Give me a break!

Most people walk around when they're in the office to collect printed materials, go to the lunchroom or speak to a colleague. When you're at home limiting screen time might be out of the question, but you should still step away for five minutes once every hour of screen time.

Set a timer to go off every 30 minutes to take a break for three to five minutes. Beyond checking the fridge or playing with your pet, five minutes of standing up and walking around will reset your body's natural

Watch this video, https://youtu.be/f1_FAaN297g
from Workplace Safety and Prevention Services for more great tips.
Link only accessible off the network.

Sources:

- <https://source.colostate.edu/ergonomic-tips-for-working-from-home/>
- <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/19/ways-to-make-your-work-from-home-space-ergonomic-better-for-your-back.html>
- <https://us.anteagroup.com/en-us/blog/how-set-home-office-basic-ergonomic-tips>
- <https://nypost.com/2020/03/17/working-from-home-heres-how-to-make-your-setup-more-ergonomic/>

A properly setup workspace allows you to adopt a natural and comfortable posture.