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## Setting Up an Ergonomic Home Workspace

The COVID-19 pandemic has moved thousands of employees from the office to the home, requiring numerous adjustments. Many lack dedicated workspaces and find themselves working at kitchen tables, on the sofa, or on makeshift desks without proper desk chairs, computer monitors, or adequate lighting. Prolonged work in these conditions can lead to eye strain, pain, and musculoskeletal disorders, which is why it is essential to set up an ergonomic home working environment.

### Maintain a Neutral Position

Ergonomics is the science of arranging the work environment to fit the person. For those who spend most of their time on a computer, a proper ergonomic posture is to maintain a neutral body position. This is a comfortable working posture in which your joints are naturally aligned. Working with the body in a neutral position reduces stress and strain on the muscles, tendons, and skeletal system and reduces the risk of developing a musculoskeletal disorder.

A neutral body posture while working at a computer means:

- Hands, wrists, and forearms are straight, in-line, and parallel to the floor.
- Head is level, forward-facing, balanced, and in line with the torso.
- Shoulders are relaxed and upper arms hang with the elbows slightly forward from the side of the body.
- Elbows stay close to the body and are bent between 90 and 120 degrees.
- Feet are fully supported by floor or footrest.

- Back is fully supported with excellent lumbar support while sitting upright.
- Thighs and hips are supported by a well-padded seat, fitting the user's height with 1" or more of space from the back of the knee.
- Knees are just slightly lower than the hips with the feet slightly forward.

### Take Breaks & Stretch

Regardless of how good your working posture is, sitting or standing still in the same position for prolonged periods is not healthy. Get up and frequently move throughout the day. Some ergonomics experts recommend standing and stretching every 20 minutes. Perform some tasks standing, if possible. Also be sure to stretch your fingers, hands, arms, and back frequently as computer work can strain these areas.

The Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration provides a check list to help set up a safe and comfortable computer workspace at [https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/checklist\\_evaluation.html](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/checklist_evaluation.html).

### What This Means for Counties

Current social distancing measures mean that many employees will continue working from home in the near future. Taking the time to set up an ergonomic workspace will make the experience more productive and less painful. For more information, contact CTSI at (303) 861 0507. 