



**WILLIAM
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CHARTERED 1693

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICE

Ergonomics: At Home

Whether or not you are new to telecommuting, you may wonder where you will set up shop. It is important to set up a proper workstation so you are comfortable and can feel your best. This is where ergonomics comes in. Ergonomics is the study of making the job fit the worker. At home, you may not have the same tools available that you are accustomed to in your normal work environment. Here are some tips to help make your home workstation setup ergonomically correct. See page 2 for a checklist to evaluate your space.

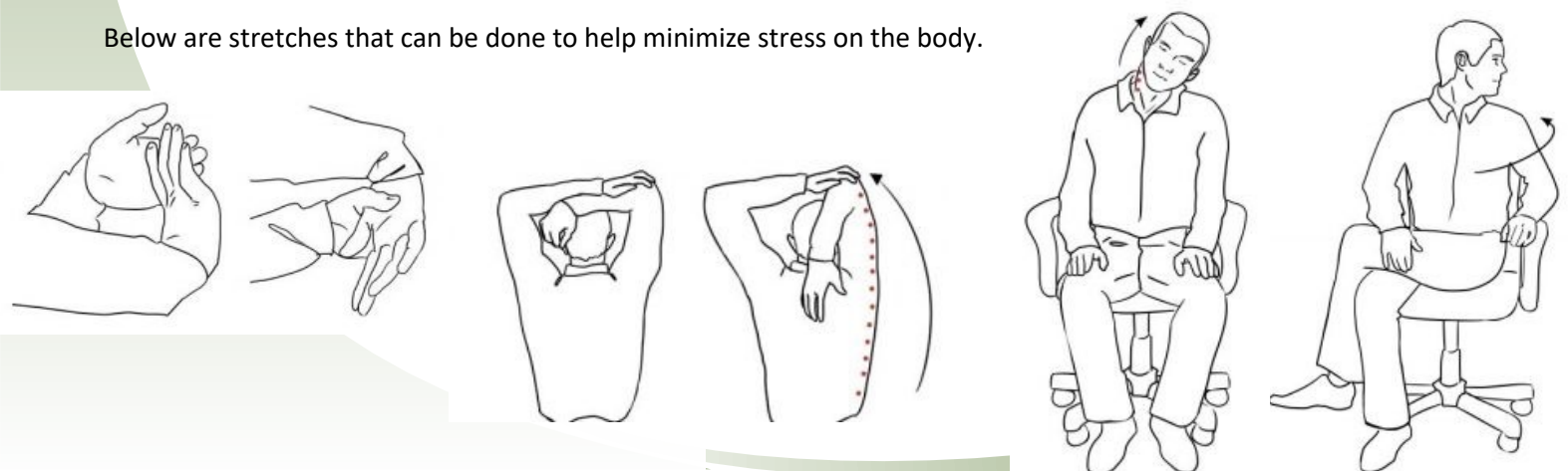
Areas to Focus on for an Ergonomic Workstation

- 1. Head and Neck:** One way to minimize stress to your body when “Out of the office” is to place your laptop or monitor on a book or object to get the screen to eye level. The middle of your screen should be in line with your eyes while you’re working, not below. This enable you to maintain a posture where your head is vertical to your neck and reduces strain on your neck, shoulders and back.
- 2. Hand and Wrist Position:** Maintaining hands and wrists in a neutral posture, similar to your head, will reduce strain. This can be achieved by changing the height of the table of chair that you’re working on or moving the keyboard/mouse closer or farther away. You want the adjustments to prevent or minimize hinging at the wrist.
- 3. Seated Posture and Back Support:** Having an awkward posture is a big factor leading to back pain when seated too long. You are looking for a posture that allows you to see the screen while sitting back in a way that provides lower back support. If you do not have an adjustable chair, using cushions, pillows or towel behind your lower back can help you find support that you chair is lacking. A footrest also helps shorter individuals achieve the right posture.
- 4. Eye Strain:** Protection from screen glare by placing any screen at 90 degrees to the light source. Variable locations lead to variables in lighting that can cause increased glare and eye strain.
- 5. Behavior:** Take frequent short breaks every 20 minutes to stand, stretch, and re-correct your posture.

Get Off the Couch

Although it may seem more comfortable, working from your sofa is one of the worst things you can do for your long-term back health. Maintain spine health by going for a chair or a barstool during working hours.

Below are stretches that can be done to help minimize stress on the body.



Telework Computer Safety Checklist

Prevent Neck and Back Strain and Pain:

- () Organize workstation so everything's in comfortable reach.
- () Allow enough room under desktop to move legs.
- () Position screen 18 to 24 inches from face.
- () Set up screen just below eye level
- () Angle screen so you don't have to strain to read it.
- () Place keyboard so all the keys are easy to reach.
- () Use a chair with fairly flat seat
- () Chair height allows feet rest on floor or footrest.
- () Sit with back straight, head level, and feet flat on floor or footrest.
- () Work with head straight, eyes parallel to the screen.
- () Shift positions regularly without leaving chair.

Prevent Eyestrain:

- () Place screen to avoid backlight glare.
- () Use dimmer light than for most tasks.
- () Place lighting so it won't reflect off screen or other surfaces.
- () Place lighting so it won't shine in eyes.
- () Place the monitor at right angles to window to prevent glare.
- () Use non-reflective screen or screen cover.
- () Choose indirect lighting where possible to prevent glare.
- () Shield lights around desk to prevent glare.
- () Adjust brightness and contrast controls for best "picture."
- () Adjust window blinds or shades to eliminate glare.
- () Keep the screen clean.
- () Periodically look away from screen for a second or two.
- () Periodically roll, blink, or close eyes tightly for a few seconds.
- () Consult eye doctor if eyestrain continues to determine if new or different glasses or eye exercises are needed.

Prevent Carpal Tunnel Syndrome:

- () Keep hands, wrists, and forearms straight and parallel to floor while working, with elbows at 90-degree angle.
- () Take breaks periodically to stretch, shake out hands.
- () Recognize symptoms (pain, numbness, tingly sensation).
- () Report symptoms immediately.

Prevent Stress:

- () Follow procedures to reduce neck and back pain and eyestrain.
- () Don't rush.
- () Don't become angry or frustrated with a computer.