

# ERGONOMICS

## FOR WORKING AT HOME

APRIL 2020

Working at a kitchen table or home office desk may be the ideal setting for poor posture, a sore neck, back trouble, eye strain, and shooting pains up your arms. The physical setup, change in routine and workload, and lack of moving around can cause a lot of issues for those now working from home. These tips will help you stay healthy and avoid injury.

1. Work at a desk or table with adequate knee/foot clearance so that you can sit/stand close to your laptop.
2. Use a separate keyboard and mouse with your laptop and position the keyboard and mouse directly in front of you within easy reach.
3. Position your laptop so that the top of the screen is level with your eye height. If you don't have a laptop riser, use a box file or some books to raise your laptop. Or plug in a separate monitor if you have one.
4. If sitting, use an adjustable chair. Use a rolled-up hand towel for extra lower back support, if needed. If your chair is too low, sit on a cushion to raise your seat height.
5. Maintain a good posture; if sitting, try to ensure that the small of your back is supported, your shoulders are relaxed (not slumped, not elevated), and that there is no unwelcome pressure on the back of your knees. If standing (e.g. at your kitchen worktop), keep your legs, torso, neck and head approximately in line and vertical – don't slouch, lean or twist to the side.
6. Don't sit or stand for too long – change your posture every few minutes and take regular micro-breaks away from your laptop.

7. Telephone – If you frequently talk on the phone and type or write at the same time, place your phone on speaker rather than cradling the phone between your head and neck.

8. Footrest – If your chair is too high for you to rest your feet flat on the floor — or the height of your desk requires you to raise the height of your chair — use a footrest. If a footrest is not available, try using a small stool or a stack of sturdy books instead.

9. Stretches – Try the stretches on the following pages or find your own online and do them regularly.

10. Avoid digital eye strain by following the 20/20/20 rule: every 20 minutes look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. You can also relax your eye muscles and rest from light stimulation by closing your eyes and gently placing the palms of your hands over your eyes for 30-60 seconds. Slowly lower your hands or open your fingers to allow the light to return.

If you are having discomfort, contact Health & Safety Coordinator Laura Stocker at [stockerl@lrsd.ab.ca](mailto:stockerl@lrsd.ab.ca). Email her a photo of your set up and she can offer some suggestions.