Ergonomic Tips for Telecommuters

UC DAVIS OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES
Ergonomics Program

Below are some useful Ergonomic tips to maintain healthy working conditions for using your computer while telecommuting.

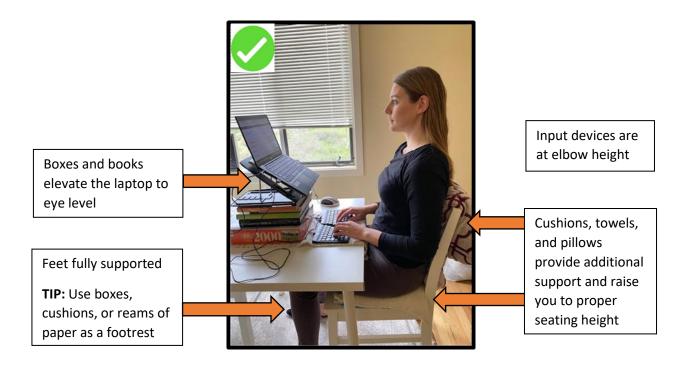|	
Laptop	**Avoid using your laptop for prolonged periods.** Evidence shows that prolonged exposure to working directly on laptops can lead to musculoskeletal issues in the neck, shoulders, wrists, and/or hands. Some studies suggest that 'no' amount of direct laptop use is safe. **Use an external monitor, keyboard, and mouse** if using a laptop. You may place the laptop on a stand or on books at eye level. Position the screen so you can easily read it, typically about an arm's length distance.
Designated Space	**Avoid sitting on a bed or couch.** Create space at a desk or table that can be dedicated for computer use.
Monitor	Position the monitor in a way that the top of the monitor is slightly below eye level, so you can view it with a slight downward gaze. In addition, place the monitor at about an arm's length distance.
Keyboard and Mouse	**Connect the laptop to a monitor** or place the laptop on a stand and use an external keyboard and mouse. Consider using speech recognition.
Chair	**Use a chair with back support**. For a kitchen or dining chair, insert a seat cushion and roll up a soft towel or blanket to place in your low back area. If a good ergonomic chair is not available, utilize pillows or cushions for added support as well as a tool to raise your sitting height to better match the height of your table
Phone	**Use a headset, speakerphone, or microphone/voice activation.** Use computer audio for conference calls.
Lighting	Position your computer at a 90-degree angle from any windows. Use room and task lighting as needed.
Plan your Day	**Establish a schedule / routine**. Create a process to check in with your team.
Breaks	Change your position every 20 minutes. This should help to relax the muscles that have been in contraction mode. Take frequent breaks away from your work area to drink water, eat lunch, and change your posture.
Training	Take the online UC-Davis Office Ergonomics Training for help with real-time adjustments you can make at any workstation. Free, online training for students is available.
Supervisor/Safety Coordinator	Work with your supervisor/Department Safety Coordinator to discuss any equipment needs and telecommute agreements.
Equipment	Contact IT for laptops, monitors, and standard keyboards and mice.
Long-term Telecommuting	Consider investing in an adjustable task chair, desk, and external monitor.
Additional Resources	Refer to these resources on sit/stand workstation, good posture, UC-Davis Office Ergonomics, Laptop Ergonomics.

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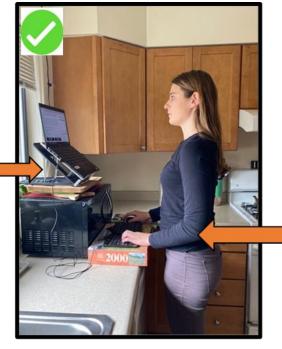
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Using a table or counter with your equipment at the right height for you will place the least amount of strain on your body. Risk of injury decreases, and you can work longer and more efficiently.

Boxes and books elevate the laptop to eye level

Feet fully supported

TIP: Use boxes, cushions, or reams of paper as a footrest

Input devices are at elbow height

Cushions, towels, and pillows provide additional support and raise you to proper seating height

Boxes, books, and a microwave elevate the laptop to eye level

TIP: Wear supportive shoes when standing

Input devices are at elbow height