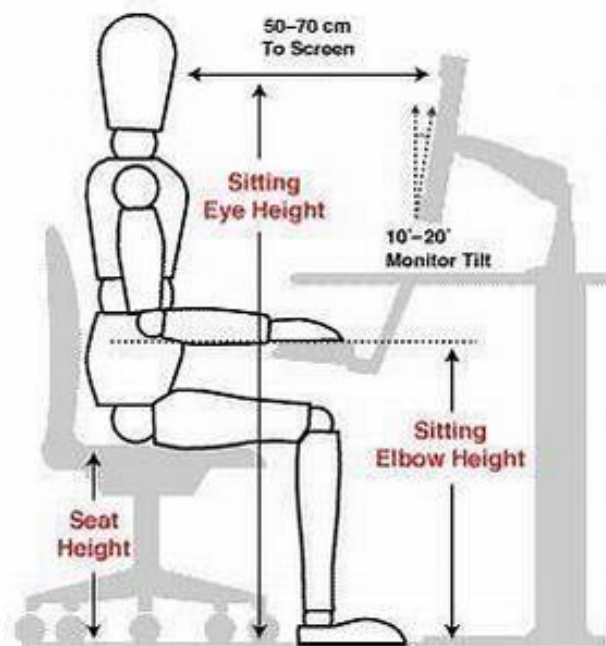




**FOOTHILL-DE ANZA**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

# Ergonomics Guide for Computer Workstations



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Ergonomics maximizes job function and productivity of the employee while preventing occupational injuries related to computer workstations, improving employee comfort, promoting return to work after a personal injury, and accommodating an employee with injuries or disabilities to perform their work tasks.

Ergonomics, or fitting a job to a person, can help lessen muscle fatigue, increase productivity and reduce the number and severity of work-related musculoskeletal disorders and related risks, such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

## 2. MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDER (MSD) INJURY

- 2.1 The District's goal through an Ergonomics Program is to prevent the occurrence of work-related musculoskeletal disorders by controlling or eliminating the risk factors which cause them. The District wants (1) to ensure that all affected employees are aware of job-related risk factors and (2) to provide information and solutions to alleviate them. The District promotes continuous improvement for the efficiency, comfort, and well-being of all employees through a team effort of management and employee involvement.
- 2.2 Pursuant to the law, the District provides medical care to all employees injured at work. All work related injuries should be reported to your supervisor and the Human Resources Department – Benefits Unit at [mybenefits@fhda.edu](mailto:mybenefits@fhda.edu) or (650) 949-6224.
- 2.3 The District maintains a good working relationship with its Worker's Compensation health care provider, Kaiser. All work-related injuries and illnesses will be referred to Kaiser ON-THE-JOB Occupational Health Center unless the injured employee has notified the District in writing that other provisions have been made prior to an injury or illness.

## 3. PROACTIVE ERGONOMIC PROGRAM

The District takes a proactive approach towards workplace safety and environmental health for all its employees. A successful Ergonomics Program is a collaborative effort that includes the District HR Benefits Team, managers/supervisors, and employees. The Benefits Director is responsible for the implementation and management of the Ergonomics Program.

In an effort to reduce the incidence of ergonomic injuries such as repetitive strain injuries, this **Ergonomics Guide for Computer Workstations** includes instructions for employees to complete an ergonomics self-assessment and for full-time and permanent District employees, to request an evaluation by the District's ergonomic consultant when appropriate.

## 4. ERGONOMIC EVALUATION STEPS

An ergonomically sound work environment maximizes employee comfort while minimizing the risk of undue physical stress. Common ergonomic best practices for desk jobs include positioning your keyboard and monitor to the proper height and distance, adjusting your chair and lumbar support to the optimal position for your body, and reducing glare due to lamps or overhead lights.

Employees are encouraged to begin the self-evaluation process first, as described in Step 1 below.

## 4.1 Step 1. Employee Self-Evaluation

It is not always practical for ergonomic evaluations to be carried out face-to-face, therefore, employees should first perform an ergonomic self-assessment.

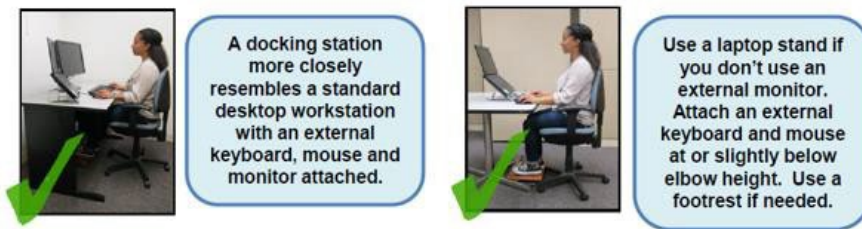
Employees will be able to self-evaluate their work tools and workstation to make ergonomic adjustments as necessary using the guidelines provided below.

### 4.1.1 General Computer Workstation Diagram and Setup

- See **Attachment 1** - A User Friendly Workstation and Checklist.
- See **Attachment 2** – Computer and Desk Stretches.

### 4.1.2 General Laptop Ergonomic tips

- Maintain a neutral neck posture by placing the top of the screen at about eye level or slightly lower if using bifocal glasses.
- Use an external monitor, laptop stand or place your laptop on a stable support surface, such as monitor risers, reams of paper, or phone books so that the screen height can be adjusted.



### 4.1.3 Working from Home

Create a dedicated workspace. Identify a space with a desk or table that can be dedicated for computer use; do not work while sitting on a bed or couch for long periods of time.

- Employees working remotely are ultimately responsible for adhering to proper ergonomics at home and should be committed to ergonomic best practices.
- Employees are permitted to borrow any necessary work station equipment from the office such as chairs, monitors, monitor stand, keyboards, wrist rests, and mouse's from the office, or request reasonable costs for purchasing any required equipment from their supervisor.
- See **Attachment 3** - Ergonomic Tips and Best Practices for Working from Home
- See **Attachment 4** – Work from Home Ergonomics Self-Assessment.

### 4.1.4 Work-Related Risk Factors

- Physical risk factors including force, postures (awkward and static), static loading and sustained exertion, fatigue, repetition, contact stress, extreme temperatures, and vibration.
- Environmental risk factors including noise, lighting, glare, air quality, temperature, humidity, and personal protective equipment and clothing.
- Combination of risk factors such as, but not limited to, highly repetitive, forceful work with no job rotation or precision work done in a dimly lit room.

### 4.1.5 Post Adjustment

After the self-adjustments are made and if workstation discomfort persists proceed with Step 2 below.

## 4.2 Step 2. Consultant Ergonomic Evaluation (if needed)

The District HR Benefits Team utilizes an Ergonomic Consultant to conduct **in-office** workstation ergonomic evaluations to help educate employees on ergonomic principles and ways to improve their workstation setup. The Consultant will provide an Ergonomic Evaluation Report with findings and recommendations.

### 4.2.1 How to Request an Evaluation

- Complete the request form, [Ergonomic Evaluation Request Form](#).
- Submit completed and approved form to [mybenefits@fhda.edu](mailto:mybenefits@fhda.edu).

### 4.2.2 In-office Ergonomic Evaluations

- The ergonomic evaluation is performed and minor modifications may be made at that time.
- An ergonomic report will also be created and sent to your supervisor.

### 4.2.3 Purchase of Ergonomic Equipment

The Department is responsible for the purchase of any in-office workstation items or equipment recommended to reasonably accommodate the employee, subject to employee's supervisor approval. Such equipment shall be funded by the employee's supervisor's budget, not Human Resources.

### 4.2.4 Virtual Workstation Assessment (Working from home)

The District does not arrange ergonomic evaluations for at-home work stations, however it encourages employees to follow the guidelines as described in Attachment 3 - Ergonomic Tips and Best Practices for Working from Home and perform an ergonomic self-evaluation as described in Attachment 4 - Work from Home Ergonomics Self-Assessment.

## 5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Below is summary of roles and responsibilities of various District positions.

### 5.1 The Benefits Director

The Benefits Director is responsible for this program. All evaluations and controls will be coordinated under the direction of the Benefits Director in collaboration with management. The Benefits Director will monitor the program on a regular basis to determine additional areas of focus as needed. Duties of the Benefits Director include the following:

- 5.1.1 Ensure that evaluators performing workstation evaluations are properly skilled;
- 5.1.2 Ensure that control measures are implemented in a timely manner;
- 5.1.3 Ensure that employees have access to self-assessment tools and guidance for proper ergonomics;
- 5.1.4 Follow-up with any ergonomics strategy and/or solutions.

## 5.2 **Managers/Supervisors**

Duties of all managers and supervisors will include:

- 5.2.1 Accountable for the health and safety of all employees within their departments through the active support of the ergonomics program;
- 5.2.2 Allocate financial resources for ergonomic equipment;
- 5.2.3 Maintain clear communication between management and employees;
- 5.2.4 Ensure that their employees have received the appropriate training;
- 5.2.5 Ensure that employees are provided with and use the appropriate tools, equipment, parts, and materials in accordance with ergonomic requirements;
- 5.2.6 Ensure that ergonomics practices and principles are considered when conducting workstation evaluations;
- 5.2.7 Ensure that recommended controls are implemented and/or used appropriately through active follow-up, and;
- 5.2.8 Report industrial injuries to [MyBenefits@fhda.edu](mailto:MyBenefits@fhda.edu).

## 5.3 **Employees**

Every employee of FHDA is responsible for conducting himself/herself in accordance to the District's Ergonomic Guidelines. All employees will:

- 5.3.1 When provided, use the appropriate tools, equipment, parts, materials, and procedures in the manner established by managers and supervisors;
- 5.3.2 Ensure that equipment is properly maintained in good condition and when not, report it immediately;
- 5.3.3 Attend ergonomics training if required and apply the knowledge and skills acquired to actual jobs, tasks, processes, and work activities;
- 5.3.4 Take responsibility in their personal health and safety, and;
- 5.3.5 Report to immediate supervisor any symptoms of discomfort that may be associated with their job duties.

## 6. **ANNUAL PROGRAM REVIEW**

The Benefits Director will conduct an annual program review to assess the progress and success of the program. The review will consider the following:

- 6.1 Evaluation of these guidelines.
- 6.2 The need for training of managers, supervisors, and employees.

6.3 The length of time between a request for an ergonomic evaluation and the actual evaluation.

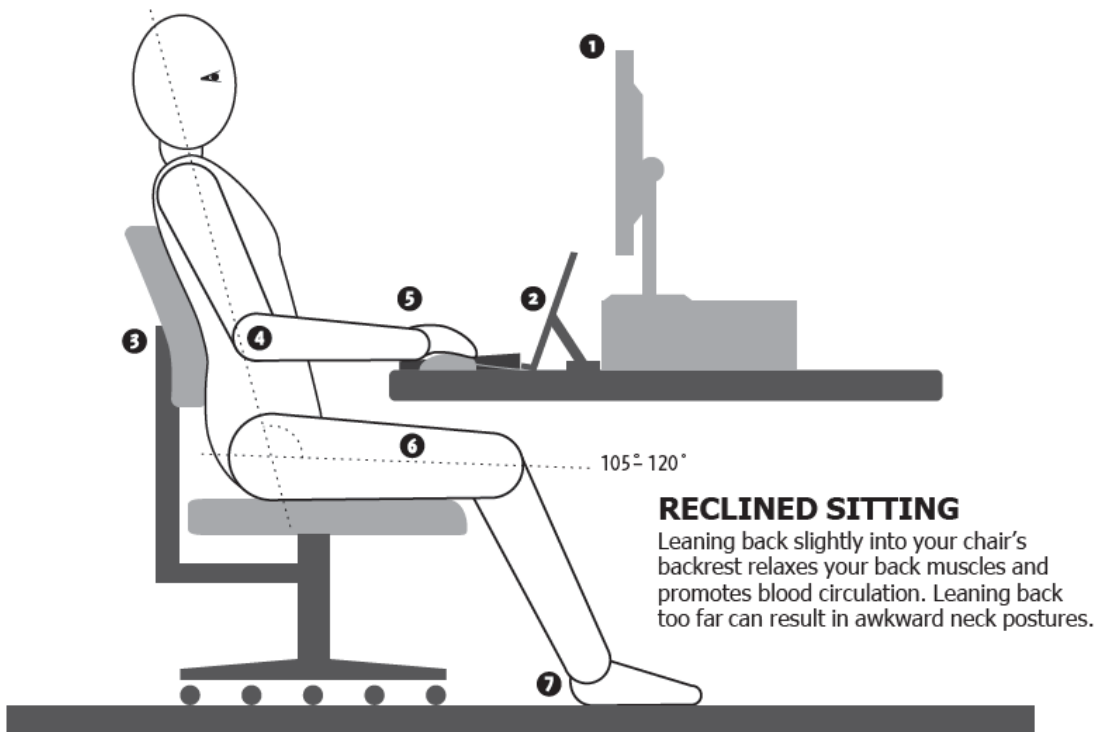
## 7. ERGONOMICS TEAM

If you should have any questions, the HR Benefits Team contacts are provided below:

Name	Title	Email /Phone
Beijing Li	Director, Benefits	<a href="mailto:libeijing@fhda.edu">libeijing@fhda.edu</a> (650) 949-6103
Shelley Du	Benefits Systems Analyst	<a href="mailto:dushelley@fhda.edu">dushelley@fhda.edu</a> (650) 949-6227

Information about the program is also available on the [Benefits web page](#).

## A USER FRIENDLY WORKSTATION



### ✓ CHECKLIST FOR A USER FRIENDLY WORKSTATION

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1</b> ✓ Top of screen at eye level; lower for bifocal wearers<br>✓ Screen distance at arm's length (18 – 36")                  | <b>5</b> ✓ Wrists straight (neutral)<br>✓ Padded, movable wrist rest, same height as front of keyboard (Do not rest wrists while typing) |
| <b>2</b> ✓ Document holder centered between monitor and keyboard or next to screen  | <b>6</b> ✓ Knees at or below hip level<br>✓ Ample legroom under work surface   |
| <b>3</b> ✓ Chair backrest provides firm lower back support<br>✓ Chair back and seat easily adjustable for height and tilt by user | <b>7</b> ✓ Feet rest firmly on floor or foot rest  |
| <b>4</b> ✓ Keyboard height promotes relaxed arms with forearms parallel to floor<br>✓ Mouse/pointing device next to keyboard      |  |

## Attachment 2 – Computer and Desk Stretches

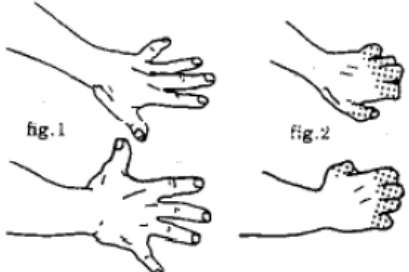

Employees should not be sedentary all day, same as in the office. Prolonged sitting at a desk or computer terminal can cause muscular tension and pain. But, by taking a five or ten minute break to do a series of stretches, your whole body can feel better. It's also helpful to learn to stretch spontaneously, throughout the day, stretching any particular area of the body that feels tense for a minute or two. This will help greatly in reducing and controlling unwanted tension and pain.


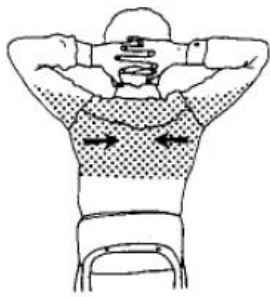


### How to Stretch



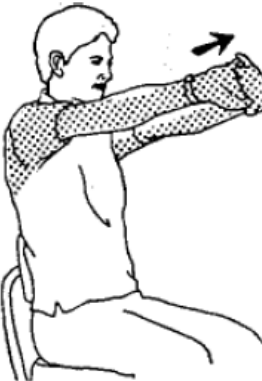

Stretching should be done slowly without bouncing. Stretch to where you feel a slight, easy stretch. Hold this feeling for 5-20 seconds. As you hold this stretch, the feeling of tension should diminish. If it doesn't, just ease off slightly into a more comfortable stretch. The easy stretch reduces tension and readies the tissues for the developmental stretch.

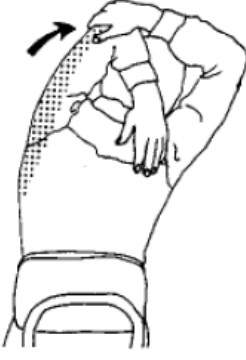




After holding the easy stretch, you can move a fraction of an inch farther into the stretch until you feel mild tension again. This is the developmental stretch which should be held for 10-15 seconds. This feeling of stretch tension should also slightly diminish or stay the same. If the tension increases or becomes painful, you are overstretching. Ease off a bit to a comfortable stretch. The developmental stretch reduces tension and will safely increase flexibility.

Hold only stretch tensions that feel good to you. The key to stretching is to be relaxed while you concentrate on the area being stretched. Your breathing should be slow, deep, and rhythmic. Don't worry about how far you can stretch.

<p>1. Separate and straighten your fingers until tension of a stretch is felt (fig. 1). Hold for 10 seconds, relax and bend your fingers at the knuckles and hold for 10 seconds (fig. 2). Repeat first outward stretch once more.</p>	
<p>2. This stretch may cause people around you to think you are very strange indeed, but you often find a lot of tension in your face from eye strain. Raise your eyebrows and open your eyes as wide as possible. At the same time, open your mouth to stretch the muscles around your nose and chin and stick your tongue out. Hold this stretch for 5-10 seconds. Caution: If you have clicking or popping noises when opening your mouth, check with your dentist before doing this stretch.</p>	

<p>3. <b>Shoulder Shrug:</b> Raise the top of your shoulders toward your ears until you feel slight tension in your neck and shoulders. Hold this feeling of tension for 3-5 seconds, then relax your shoulders downward into their normal position. Do this 2-3 times. Good to use at the first signs of tightness or tension in the shoulder and neck area.</p>	
<p>4. With fingers interlaced behind head, keep elbows straight out at sides with upper body in a good aligned position. Now pull your shoulder blades toward each other to create a feeling of tension through upper back and shoulder blades. Hold this feeling of mild tension for 8-10 seconds, then relax. Do several times. This is good to do when shoulders and upper back are tense or tight.</p>	
<p>5. Start with head in a comfortable, aligned position. Slowly tilt head to left side to stretch muscles on side of neck. Hold stretch for 10-20 seconds. Feel a good, even stretch and do not overstretch. Then tilt head to right side and stretch. Do 2-3 times to each side.</p>	
<p>6. From a stable, aligned sitting position turn your chin toward your left shoulder to create a stretch on the right side of your neck. Hold right stretch tensions for 10-20 seconds. Do each side twice.</p>	

<p>7. Gently tilt your head forward to stretch the back of the neck. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times. Hold only tensions that feel good. Do not stretch to the point of pain.</p>	
<p>8. Hold your left arm just above the elbow with the right hand. Now gently pull elbow toward opposite shoulder as you look over your left shoulder. Hold stretch for 15-20 seconds. Do both sides.</p>	
<p>9. Interlace fingers, then straighten arms in front of you. The palm should be facing away from you as you do this stretch. Feel stretch in arms and through the upper part of the shoulder blades. Hold stretch for 10-15 seconds. Do at least two times.</p>	
<p>10. Interlace fingers then turn palms upwards above your head as you straighten your arms. Think of elongating your arms as you feel a stretch through arms and upper sides of rib cage. Hold for 10-20 seconds. Hold only stretches that feel relaxing. Do three times.</p>	

<p>11. Hold left elbow with right hand, then gently pull elbow behind head until an easy tension-stretch is felt in shoulder or back of upper arm (triceps). Hold Computer and Desk Stretches easy stretch for 30 seconds. Do not overstretch. Do both sides.</p>	
<p>12. Hold onto your lower leg just below the knee. Gently pull bent leg toward your chest and isolate a stretch in the side of your upper leg. Make use of the right arm to pull bent leg towards the opposite shoulder. Hold for 10-20 seconds at easy stretch tension. Do both sides.</p>	
<p>13. A stretch for the side of hip, lower and middle of back. Sit with left leg bent over right leg, then rest elbow for forearm of right arm on the outside of the upper thigh of the left leg. Now apply some controlled, steady pressure toward the right with the elbow or forearm. As you do this, look over your left shoulder to get the stretch feeling. Do both sides. Hold for 15 seconds.</p>	
<p>14. The next stretch is done with fingers interlaced behind your back. Slowly turn your elbows inward while straightening your arms. An excellent stretch for shoulders and arms. This is good to do when you find yourself slumping forward from your shoulders. This stretch can be done at any time. Hold for 5-15 seconds. Do twice.</p>	
<p>15. To stretch your calf, stand a little way from a wall for solid support and lean on it with your forehead resting on your hands. Bend over and place your foot on the floor in front while leaving the other leg straight. Slowly move your hips forward until you feel a stretch in the calf of your straight leg. Be sure to keep the heel of the foot of the straight leg on the floor and your toes pointed straight ahead. Hold an easy stretch for 30 seconds. Stretch both legs.</p>	

## Attachment 3 – Ergonomic Tips and Best Practices for Working from Home

Employees who work remotely use laptops or tablets to perform their daily tasks. The District encourages a proper work surface and seating to appropriately accommodate a workstation; working in awkward postures for extended periods of time can increase the risk of ergonomic-related injuries, such as tendonitis, rotator cuff, and carpal tunnel syndrome.

To minimize computer-related injuries while working from home, the following guidelines review how to set up your workstation and tips to help avoid musculoskeletal related disorders.

### 1. CHAIR

- 1.1. Use a chair that properly supports you.
- 1.2. Sit with your thighs parallel to the floor. If the table or desk you are using is too high and you do not have an adjustable chair, use a pillow to lift your body up to avoid shrugging your shoulders.
- 1.3. Use a footrest (or an equivalent sturdy object) to prevent your feet from dangling.
- 1.4. Make sure that your lumbar (lower back) is well supported. If necessary, use a pillow to minimize stress on the back if sitting on a hard surface such as a dining room chair.

### 2. DESK

- 2.1. If you do not have a desk, use a surface that emulates a desk (such as a table).
- 2.2. Make sure there is ample legroom. Surfaces that have items stored underneath (such as cabinets or drawers) take up leg space and can lead to awkward posture, such as leaning forward or extending your arms to use your input devices.

### 3. MONITORS, LAPTOPS AND TABLETS

- 3.1. Place the computer monitor about an arm's length away from you and set up the monitor so that the top line of the screen is at or below your eye level.
- 3.2. If using a tablet or laptop, use a sturdy object to raise the top of the screen to eye level. If possible, get a tablet/laptop stand from an online retailer to adjust the height of your equipment. There are various stands on the market.

### 4. KEYBOARD AND MOUSE

- 4.1. Laptops and tablets should be fitted with an external keyboard and mouse to prevent hand extension/reaching and contact stress.
- 4.2. Move your keyboard/mouse so that you can reach them with your elbows resting at your sides and your wrists in neutral posture position.
- 4.3. Use a hands-free headset or use the speaker function on your phone to reduce undue strain from poor posture.

### 5. ENVIRONMENT

- 5.1. Work in an environment where you are not easily distracted.
- 5.2. Make sure there is enough light at your workstation for the task you are doing.
  - If you are working on a paper document, use an adjustable task light.


- Position the task light below eye level to prevent dry eyes, eye strain or headache.
- Position the task light opposite your writing hand so as not to cast shadow on the document.
- Limit overhead light to reduce glare.

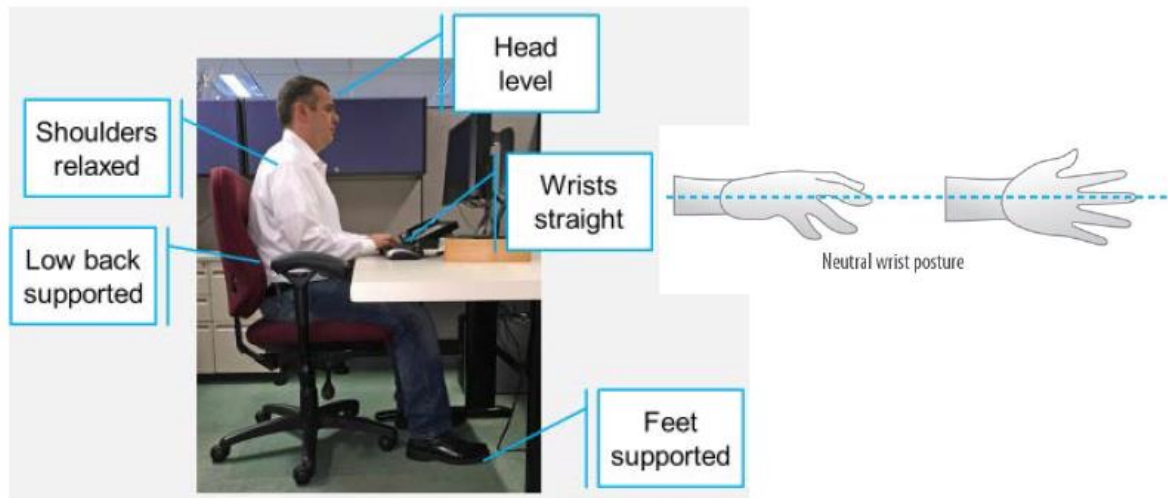
## 6. **OTHER**


- 6.1. Take two or three 30-to-60-second microbreaks each hour to allow your body to recover from periods of repetitive stress.
- 6.2. Vary your work posture by standing, moving to make or receive calls.
- 6.3. Arrange electrical cords carefully so that they are not a tripping hazard. Ensure that cords are plugged into a safe outlet that is not overloaded.
- 6.4. Make sure your home has clear and unobstructed hallways, walkways, stairs and exits.
- 6.5. Follow the 20-20-20 rule for your eyes. This means that for every 20 minutes you spend staring at a screen, you should look away at an object that is 20 feet away for a minimum of 20 seconds.

## Attachment 4– Work from Home Ergonomics Self-Assessment

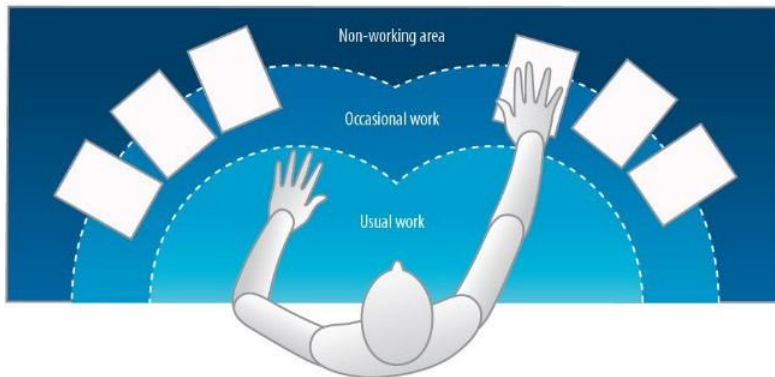
Key: DIY = Do It Yourself

Item	Desk Chair	Yes	No	Suggested Actions if “no”
1.	My chair is comfortable and working appropriately.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DIY: Create a standing station and alternate your positions throughout the day. Ensure that your keyboard, mouse and monitor screen are at the correct height (see illustration below).</li> </ul>
2.	When I lean against the backrest, my feet are fully supported by the floor.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add a footrest.</li> <li>DIY - books or boxes, duct taped as needed</li> </ul>
3.	My chair provides support for my lower back.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add a lumbar cushion.</li> <li>DIY: Use a rolled towel behind your low back. Pin on a strap to make it stay in place better.</li> <li>Some chairs are more comfortable with a vertical pillow added. See photo</li> </ul> 
4.	When using the backrest, I can sit without the chair edge pressing into my thighs or the backside of my knees.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a footrest to raise your feet slightly.</li> <li>Add a cushion to the backrest to make the seat pan smaller.</li> </ul>



Item	Keyboard, Mouse and Monitor	Yes	No	Suggested Actions if “no”
5.	<p>My elbows stay close to my sides <u>and</u> my wrists are mostly neutral (not bent) when I use my keyboard and mouse.</p> <p><i>Many keyboards have foldable feet under them. Sometimes it helps to flatten the feet or sometimes, to leave the keyboard at an angle. Pay attention to what helps make your wrists straighter.</i></p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise or lower workstation</li> <li>• Raise or lower keyboard</li> <li>• Raise or lower chair</li> <li>• Change the keyboard tilt</li> <li>• Check posture</li> <li>• Alter the keyboard feet and check your wrist posture</li> </ul>
6.	My mouse is the same level and next to my keyboard.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move mouse closer to the keyboard</li> </ul>
7.	I adjusted the screen brightness, contrast and font size so my eyes are comfortable when looking at the screen.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjust Settings - Click on Windows key/ Settings/System/Display</li> <li>• Blink often on purpose</li> <li>• Look across the room often, or out the window, to change your focal point</li> </ul>
8.	My mousing hand and arm feels good, without aches or pains.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try switching to the other hand for a while to give your uncomfortable hand a rest. To use either index finger as your primary click, change mouse button settings in the computer control panel.</li> <li>• Investigate other types of pointing devices</li> </ul>
9.	My monitor is located directly in front of me. My neck is in neutral and not rotated.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reposition monitor – align the center of the monitor with the middle of your body</li> </ul>
10.	<p>I can lean against my backrest and see the screen clearly without leaning forward.</p> <p><i>The correct distance from the user is dependent on the size of the monitor, the font, screen resolution and the individual user (e.g. vision and use of bifocals or progressive eyeglasses).</i></p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reposition monitor—lean against the backrest and reach out in front of you to measure the distance. Start with the monitor about an arm’s length away. Adjust the distance as needed for eye comfort.</li> </ul>
11.	<p>I don’t wear glasses and the top of my monitor is near eye level.</p>  <p>Or, I wear progressive lenses or bifocals and the screen is low enough for me to view it without tilting my chin up.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have a separate keyboard and mouse, raise or lower the monitor so the top of the screen is at eye level.</li> <li>• If you tend to tilt your chin up to read the screen, lower the monitor a few more inches.</li> <li>• Raise the chair and add a footrest if needed.</li> <li>• Tilt the screen so that it’s at a more natural reading angle.</li> </ul>

Item	Work Surface	Yes	No	Suggested Actions if “no”
12.	I have sufficient legroom under my desk. Nothing under the desk encroaches into my leg space, or compromises my posture or could cause a tripping hazard.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rearrange workstation – make more space under the desk so that you can’t possibly catch your foot on a cord or other obstacle.</li> </ul>
13.	Items that I use frequently are located close to me. Items that I use less often are in the “occasional work” area.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rearrange workstation</li> </ul>



Item	Wellness and Safety	Yes	No	Suggested Actions if “no”
14.	I take mini-pauses to relieve static posture and to rest my eyes. I alternate between sitting and standing, or move around before I get tired or have discomfort.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set reminders to take breaks</li> <li>Refocus your eye gaze on something 20 feet away every 20 minutes</li> <li>Purposely blink often</li> </ul>
15.	I don’t have any trip hazards around my work area, such as wily cables, mats, piles of things on the floor, etc.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevent slips, trips and falls with good housekeeping.</li> </ul>

Item	Accessories	Yes	No	Suggested Actions if “no”
16.	If I use the phone while writing or keying, I use a headset or speakerphone.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use speakerphone</li> <li>Obtain a headset</li> <li>Use ear buds</li> </ul>
17.	I can look at reference documents while typing without bending my neck very much.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a copy holder</li> <li>DIY: Prop up papers on a 3-ringed binder turned sideways. Put a binder clip on the narrow edge to keep papers from sliding off.</li> </ul>

Item	Laptop	Yes	No	Suggested Actions if “no”
18.	I use a laptop computer for long periods of time			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If possible, get appropriate laptop accessories, such as a separate keyboard and mouse.</li> </ul>

Item	Summary	Yes	No. List item number that needs intervention
19.	I have been able to implement the above adjustments and work methods and am comfortable with my workstation set up and environment.		

This self-assessment is provided by DOSH Ergonomics (March 2025)