

## Ergonomics During the Pandemic Response – Work at Home Ergonomics

Working remotely suddenly has created a plethora of workstations that are hastily put together. Now that we have been working remotely for a little while, it is time to survey the workstations we have set up and think through how best these stations can be altered to fit us better. The workstation should fit the person, not the other way around.

Here are some ergonomics best practices for working remotely:

- Use a chair and table, or desktop instead of the couch or an easy chair.
- Ideally, your neck is at a neutral position and so are your elbows and wrists.
- When reading exclusively on your laptop, prop the laptop on a stack of books so that your neck is at a neutral position; when working more on typing activities, set the stack of books aside and maintain neutral positions for your elbows.
- If your chair is too high, consider supporting your feet, add books or small shelf under the desk for your feet to rest.
- If possible, use a separate monitor and/or keyboard for maximizing the neutral positioning of your neck and arms. The top of the monitor should be slightly below eye level in an ideal set up.
- Use a chair with armrests and a good back.
- Raise your chair; most kitchen tables are too high for extended periods of computer work.
- Face your workstation head-on, don't twist your shoulders to work on the keyboard or read the screen.
- Consider eliminating vibrations. If your computer is vibrating your desk or table, this could result in irritation to nerves over time.
- Consider placing any vibrating equipment on a book or other material that would insulate the vibrations.

If these suggestions are not possible due to lack of resources, take more frequent breaks and give yourself a walk around the house. Using an improper workstation setup for an extended duration can cause an increased risk of repetitive strain injury. It is

important to set up your workstations as best you can to prevent injury regardless of where you might work.