

Comfort tips for computer users (home office and on the road)

Workplace Safety | Ergonomics



It is important for employees to apply good ergonomic practices even when they are not in a traditional office environment. Whether working at home, in an office or while traveling, ergonomic risk from working at a computer can be reduced with proper posture, good work habits and appropriately adjusted equipment. The following tips should help minimize potential risk factors and maximize your personal comfort.

Table/desk

- Use a desk between 28-30 inches in height
- Desk thickness should not exceed 2 inches
- Allow for adequate leg room with a minimum of 18-inch depth and 24-inch knee width
- Desks should provide depth to place the monitor at least 18-20 inches from the user
- If a desk is not available, use a dining table with a height adjustable chair
- Refrain from using lap desks for long periods of time
- Refrain from working off of a kitchen countertop
- Refrain from sitting on the floor and working

Chair

- Use an adjustable chair with the following features:

- Pneumatic height adjustment
- Lumbar back support
- Height adjustable seat back with locking function
- Adjustable depth seat pan
- Padded armrests that are height and depth adjustable with rounded edges (Optional)
- Consider sitting on a small, moderately firm pillow in order to place the seated elbow height at the level of the keyboard and mouse
- A thin pillow can be used to provide additional support to the lower back
- Refrain from sitting on very soft couches; they do not support the body evenly during extended sitting
- Stand, stretch, and/or walk after sitting every two hours

Get tips on selecting an ergonomic chair.

Keyboard/mouse

- Utilize a keyboard and mouse
- If the desk height is too high, consider a height adjustable keyboard tray
- Ensure the mouse is next to the keyboard
- Ensure that keyboard and mouse cord length are adequate and free of tangles
- The keyboard and mouse should be near the edge of the table
- Avoid planting the wrists during keyboard and mouse use
- Use a small rolled up towel as a palm support when typing
- When using a laptop for prolonged periods use an external keyboard and mouse

Learn the ergonomics of alternative keyboards.

Monitor

- Position the monitor directly in front of the body at roughly arm's length away
- Dual monitors should be positioned at more than an arm's length and positioned in an arc
- Large monitors should also be positioned at more than an arm's reach
- The top two-thirds of the monitor(s) should fall within eye level
- Use a small box, reams of paper, books, etc., to raise the height of the monitor(s) or laptop
- Position monitors away from direct sunlight

Office accessories

- A footrest is often needed to support the feet when your chair is raised to work at the desk height
- Consider a headset if you are on the phone for more than two hours per day
- Use a document holder to position reference documents
- View documents at/or close to the same height as the monitor

- Use a small box, reams of paper, or phone book to support feet
- Use speakerphone for long or frequent calling
- Angle a clipboard near the monitor to hold reference documents

Lighting

- Change the orientation of the workstation if glare or reflection is present
- Task lighting can be used to highlight documents and desktop areas
- Lamps with diffusers or shields can help to reduce glare
- Light from lamps should not directly face the eyes
- Avoid facing windows without shades or curtains



Related resources

[Comfort tips for computer users \(seated workstations\)](#)

[Comfort tips for computer user \(seated workstations Spanish\)](#)

[Office stretching poster](#)

Comfort Tips for Seated Computer Users

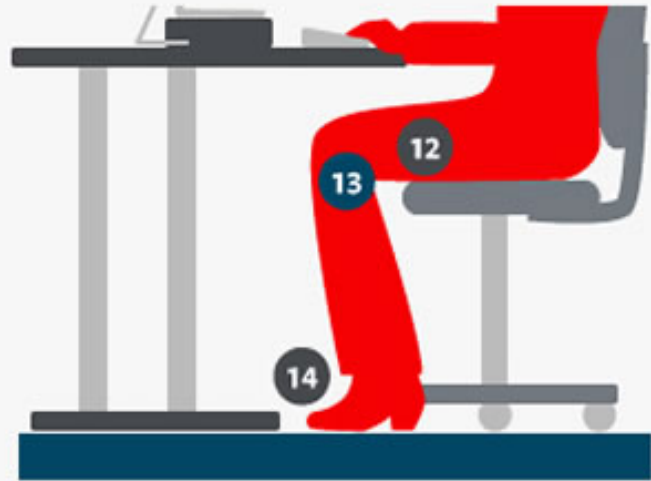
- 1 Keep top of screen at or near eye level
- 2 Use a document holder while typing
- 3 Minimize glare on your screen
- 4 Keep head upright, facing forward
- 5 Relax shoulders and sit up with your chair slightly tilted back



- 6 Keep keyboard at elbow height
- 7 Do not overstretch your fingers and use a light touch when typing
- 8 Keep wrists straight when typing and using the mouse
- 9 Keep elbows at 90-degree angles at your sides
- 10 Place mouse next to keyboard, within a comfortable reach
- 11 Rest palms on wrist rest when pausing



- 12 Keep your thighs approximately parallel to the floor
- 13 Keep backs of your knees slightly away from the chair
- 14 Rest your feet firmly on floor or footrest



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