



Easing the *Transition* to Home Based Work



Turn commuting time into extra sleep (and exercise) time: Many of us don't get enough sleep (or exercise), so take advantage of a little extra time to sleep (and exercise). Sleep is restorative for our brains and bodies. Exercise strengthens your body, combats health conditions, improves mood, boosts energy, and even helps you sleep better.



Create a productive working space: Create work and living space boundaries by setting up a designated work space, a place where you can have uninterrupted peace and quiet.



Take care of your mental health: Uncertainty and a change in routine makes mental health a key focus. During times of stress, pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Create a new structured schedule. Exercise regularly, eat healthily and breathe. Reach out to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 1-800-287-2173.



Manage the flow of information: The news and changing information can cause anyone to feel anxious or distressed. Limit the amount of time you spend seeking information and updates to a few specific times during the day.



Stay socially connected: In situations of isolation, try to keep your personal daily routines. Stay connected via email, social media, video chatting, and telephone.



Stay connected with work colleagues and clients: Participate in video calls, interactive webinars, virtual team huddles and check-ins to stay in contact and support your colleagues and clients.

**Stay Home
Stay Safe**

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Free floating astronauts do it automatically. Synchronized swimmers do it to have a flat back for the vertical line. Most fitness instructors promote it. And we can take full advantage of doing it when we are seated, standing and sleeping. The “it” in this case is the **neutral spine position**.

Maintaining one’s body in a neutral spine position is chock full of amazing benefits and is guaranteed

to help reduce chronic neck and back pain. When you are sitting, standing or sleeping in a neutral spine position all the spaces between your vertebral discs are equal. The nerves that reside between the discs can send accurate signals to your organs, muscles, ligaments and tendons. A neutral spine position helps support balance, enhances breathing and is the best way to use the least amount of energy to maintain a desired position.

What does a neutral spine position look like? As you will see from the diagram above, it looks like a mild S-curve. There are three natural curves in an individual’s healthy spine: 1) the neck or cervical spine which curves gently forward; 2) the mid back or thoracic spine which curves backward; and 3) the low back or lumbar spine which curves forward. Since we all have unique bodies, everyone’s neutral spine will be a bit different.

How can we ensure that we are in a neutral spine position when we are seated or standing at the workplace? Ergonomic specialists recommend the following guidelines to promote the correct spinal alignment.

To maintain a neutral spine position when seated:

- Put your feet on the floor or on a footrest.
- Make sure your hips are slightly higher than your knees.
- Support your lower back.
- Line up your head, neck, shoulders and elbows.

- Relax your shoulders.
- Bend elbows at 90-100 degrees.
- Keep wrists straight.
- Keeps fingers curled and relaxed.
- Position your monitor an arm’s length away.

To maintain a neutral spine while standing at a desk:

- Rest your feet comfortably on an even surface.
- Wear shoes with proper insoles that work for you.
- Stand on an anti-fatigue mat with beveled edges that sits flat on the floor.
- Keep your knees unlocked.
- Rest your upper arms comfortably at your side with elbows at a 90-100 degree angle.
- Keep wrists straight, not pressing into the desk’s edge.
- Center your head over your neck and shoulders.
- Put your foot on a footrest for added low back support.
- During the pause phase of your work, relax your arms by your side. Take a breath break.

For more information check out this Computer Workstation ETool:

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/index.html>

Tips for Setting up Your *Improvised* Home Office

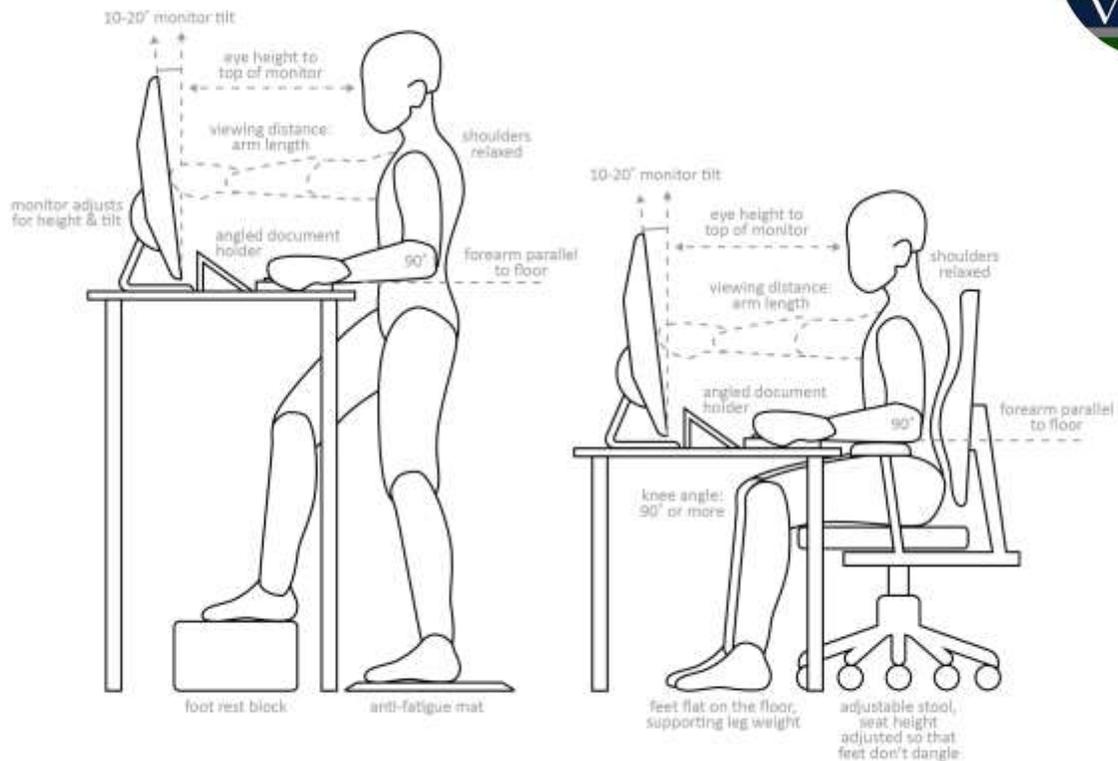
If you’re using a laptop, use an external keyboard and mouse. Raise your monitor with books or boxes so your head/neck are in a neutral position while viewing it directly in front of you.

Find a work surface for your keyboard and mouse (seated or standing) that is the right height for you keeping your shoulders relaxed with your elbows by your side and forearms parallel to the floor.

For low back support, you may need to use a rolled-up towel or pillow.

Sit on a cushion to elevate yourself if the work surface is too high.

Optimal Standing and Seated Positions



Additional Tips

- Establish a start and end time for your work day
- Take mini breaks throughout the day (step outside for fresh air, stretch)
- Stand up and walk around during phone calls
- Alternate between sitting and standing
- Avoid laying down or sitting cross legged on the floor, couch, or bed while working
- Avoid distractions

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**Be Well
Stay Well**

**Thank you for the
great work you do!**