

How to Create a Comfortable Home Workspace



EXECUTIVE BRIEF

When business leaders sent their teams to work from home in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, most employees didn't have a home office.¹ Social media was flooded with images of people working on couches and coffee tables, using ironing boards as standing desks and perching computer monitors on cardboard boxes.

As employers explore continued remote, in-person and hybrid work options, employees and leadership teams need to think beyond temporary fixes and take action to help keep remote workers comfortable, healthy and productive for the long haul.

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WHY MOVEMENT MATTERS FOR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

In addition to chronic stress and associated symptoms, remote workers are at risk for a common and well-documented health issue: inactivity. Studies show that a sedentary lifestyle may increase the risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer, and Type 2 diabetes.^{2,3,4}

While inactivity appears to damage physical health, research shows that movement may positively impact our mental health. Scientists at Johns Hopkins University found that increasing physical activity appears to be followed by a boost in mood and perceived energy level.⁵

CREATE A COMFORTABLE HOME WORKSPACE

So how do you create a workstation that supports regular movement and overall health? It's simple—build a comfortable home workspace, follow basic ergonomic principles and move frequently. Ergonomics may sound complicated, but the concept is simple: adapt your workspace to fit you rather than forcing your body into uncomfortable postures.

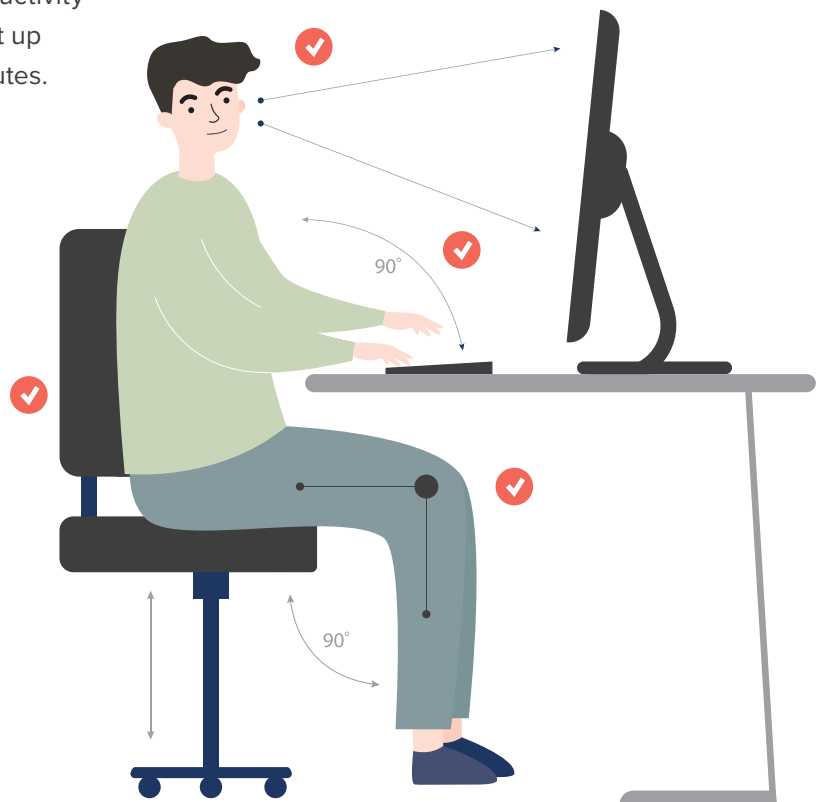
Here's how to do it:

- **CHAIR:** Sit back in your chair so that you have lumbar support. A rolled-up towel can work if your chair doesn't have lumbar support. If your chair is adjustable, raise or lower it so that your feet are flat on the floor and your knees are at about the same height as your hips. Adjust to your comfort but keep a nice open angle between your torso and legs.
- **KEYBOARD:** After you adjust your chair, check your keyboard height. It should be level with your elbow and your wrists should remain flat. If your elbows are lower than the keyboard, raise your chair, and add a footrest to keep your feet flat on the floor. If your keyboard is still too high, add a keyboard tray that goes below your desk surface. If your elbows are higher than the keyboard, consider a back-tilt keyboard tray to maintain flat wrists.



- **FAVORITE TOOLS:** Keep the things you use frequently close to your body so you're not reaching for your notebook or phone all day long.
- **MONITORS:** Your monitors should be about an arm's length away from your eyes, and you should look slightly down when viewing the center of the screen. Avoid straining your neck up or down when viewing. The top of the monitor should be at or slightly below eye level. A desk or wall-mounted monitor arm allows you to position one or more monitors exactly where you need them.
- **ANTI-FATIGUE MAT AND FOOTREST:** A quality anti-fatigue floor mat stimulates blood circulation and helps prevent fatigue. When you stand on an anti-fatigue mat, shift your weight from one leg to the other to keep moving slightly and to avoid muscle strain. When sitting, you can use a footrest if needed to stay comfortable and keep your feet on the floor. Maintain an angle between 90° and 120° at your hips to avoid transferring stress to your lower back.
- **MOVEMENT:** Move frequently throughout the day. If you have a height-adjustable standing desk, switch between sitting and standing every 30 minutes for better productivity and well-being. If you don't have a standing desk, get up every 30–60 minutes and walk around for a few minutes.
- **POSTURE:** Maintain a relaxed, neutral posture with chest open, your shoulders down and your chin slightly down. Keep your upper arms roughly parallel with your torso so your shoulders aren't extended; that can build stress in your upper body.

For more ergonomic tips and tools, visit [ergotron.com/ergonomics](https://www.ergotron.com/ergonomics).



IF YOU'RE MISSING SOME OF THE COMPONENTS OF A HEALTHY WORKSPACE, LIKE A **HEIGHT-ADJUSTABLE STANDING DESK** OR **MONITOR ARM**, IT'S WORTH CHECKING IN WITH YOUR MANAGER OR HUMAN RESOURCES TEAM. THEY MAY OFFER STIPENDS OR REIMBURSE HOME OFFICE FURNITURE OR EQUIPMENT PURCHASES.

CONCLUSION

Employees worldwide are facing heightened levels of stress as they adapt to changes in their work and personal lives. Moving more, sitting less and creating a comfortable home office setup can positively impact physical and mental well-being. With frequent movement and a healthy workspace setup, employees are empowered to work in a way that's comfortable and supports their health now and well into the future.

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- ⁵ "Increased Motor Activity Linked to Improved Mood." *Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health*, 12 December 2018. <https://www.jhsph.edu/news/news-releases/2018/increased-motor-activity-linked-to-improved-mood.html>

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to create home workspaces that offer freedom to move, choice and autonomy.
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