



Stanford
HEALTH CARE

STANFORD MEDICINE

Working from home?

Here's how to optimize your home ergonomic setup!

To request an ergonomic evaluation for your home setup (performed remotely), contact heidi@vocolutions.com

Home Offices – Typical Challenges

If you're one of the many people who are working from home for now, EHS wants to ensure that you remain healthy and free of work-related discomfort during this time.

Let's review the most typical challenges and quick fixes to help you be productive and comfortable from home. We will focus on setups in 4 common work-from-home locations: home office, kitchen table, couch, and bed.



Home working location #1: Home Office Desk

Having an actual desk (and possibly even an “ergonomic” chair) is a good start, but working at a desk on a laptop can still result in reduced back support, neck strain, and a working surface that is too high.

Forward head and reduced back support



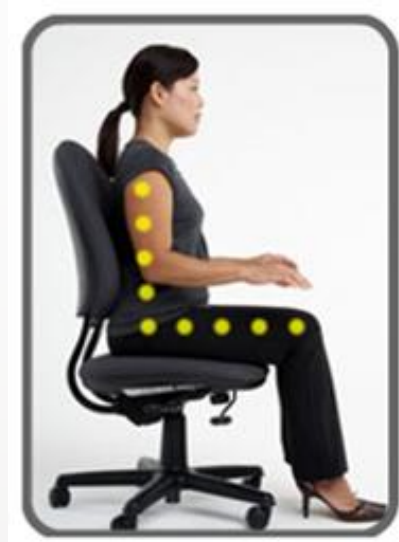
Pressure on wrists

X

Simple fixes: Working from your home office desk

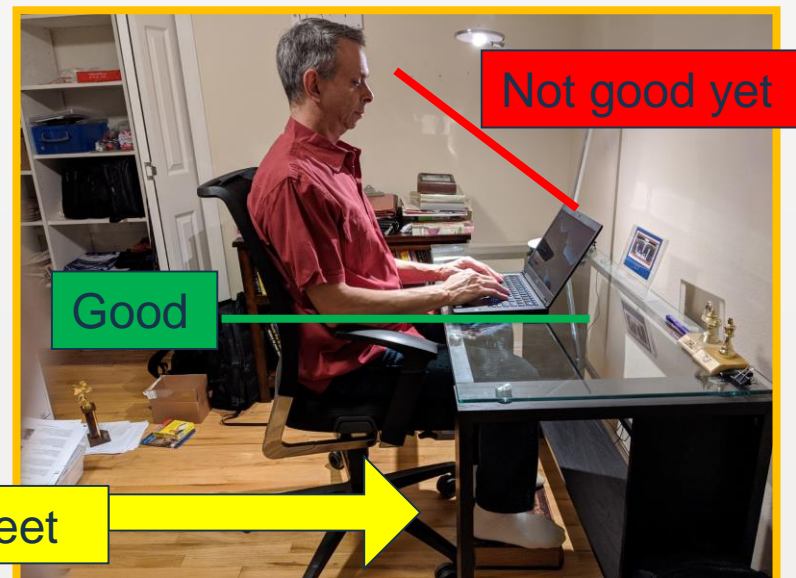
FIRST, if you have an ergonomic chair, adjust it properly:

- Back upright and supportive
- Small gap between front of seat and backs of knees
- Armrests down or removed



NEXT, raise the chair and use a footrest:

- Goal is for elbows to be level with height of keyboard
- Sit back in chair



Simple fixes: Working from your home office desk

FINALLY --- If you have a mouse and keyboard, use them!

- Raise your laptop separately. This will help bring your display height closer to eye level. The screen may not be able to be right at eye level, but the higher the better. For optimal display positioning, use an external monitor if you have one.
- Keep your head over your shoulders. Lower your eyes to view the laptop screen if it is still below eye level.



Home working location #2: Kitchen Table

**Problem: Table is fixed height;
too high for mouse and
keyboard, too low for screen**

- Raised shoulders, head forward
- Contact pressure from table edge on wrist / forearms



X

**Problem: Chair is not adjustable,
offers poor back support**



Simple fixes: Working from your kitchen table

FIRST:

- Sit upright. Use a rolled-up towel to support your low back.



NEXT:

- Sit on a pillow to raise yourself up so that your arms are level with the height of the laptop keyboard. This will reduce the strain to your wrists.



Simple fixes: Working from your kitchen table

FINALLY:

- If possible, procure an external mouse and keyboard, and set these up in front of you close to your arms.
- Raise the laptop itself on a box or thick book so the top of the display is closer to eye level. This will help keep your head level and balanced over your shoulders.



Good additions

Perform regular stretches. Change positions frequently.

Home working location #3: Couch

Awkward
neck bending



X

Working from your couch is not recommended for lengthy periods. It is very difficult to maintain neutral body postures from the couch. There is a lot of reaching, rounding of the low back, and forward head / neck postures.

Reaching forward



Simple fixes: Working from your couch

Sit upright and all the way back on the couch. Use pillows to support your back if needed.

Keep the laptop on your lap, instead of reaching for it on a coffee table or other surface in front of you. If your laptop keyboard is lower than your elbows, put a pillow under your laptop.

Keep your head over your shoulders and lower your eyes to view the screen.



Even in the best possible working posture from your couch, limit this to 30 minutes at a time, up to twice a day.

Home working location #4: Bed

Working from your bed may feel comfortable for a short time, but after a few hours you may feel some strain in your neck, shoulders, arms, or back. This position causes your muscles to work harder than they should. Over time this can be fatiguing.

This is the worst place to work from an ergonomic perspective.

Awkward
wrist bending



X

Neck strain



Simple fixes: Working from your bed

Sit upright. Use pillows to support your head, low back, and arms.

Keep your laptop at the height of your arms to avoid bending your wrists to type. Keep your head upright but just lower your eyes to view the screen.



Even in the best possible working posture from your bed, limit this to 30 minutes at a time, up to twice a day.

Home Offices – Other Helpful Tips

Change positions frequently. Since your home office setup may not be as good as your office setup, it is even more important to move, change, positions, and take frequent standing and walking breaks.



Accessory devices such as headsets and document holders can be helpful. If you have them, use them.



Perform regular stretches.

