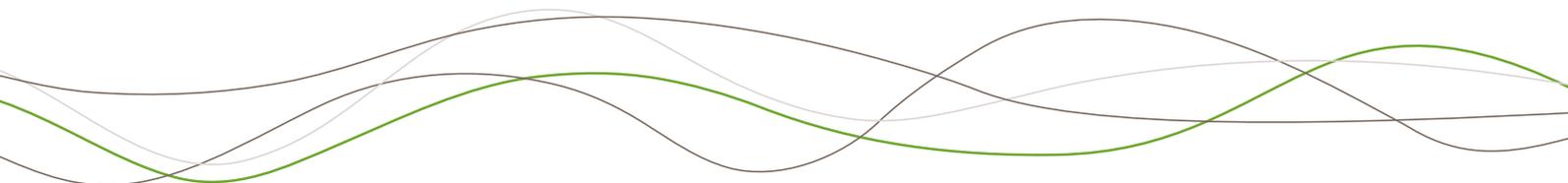
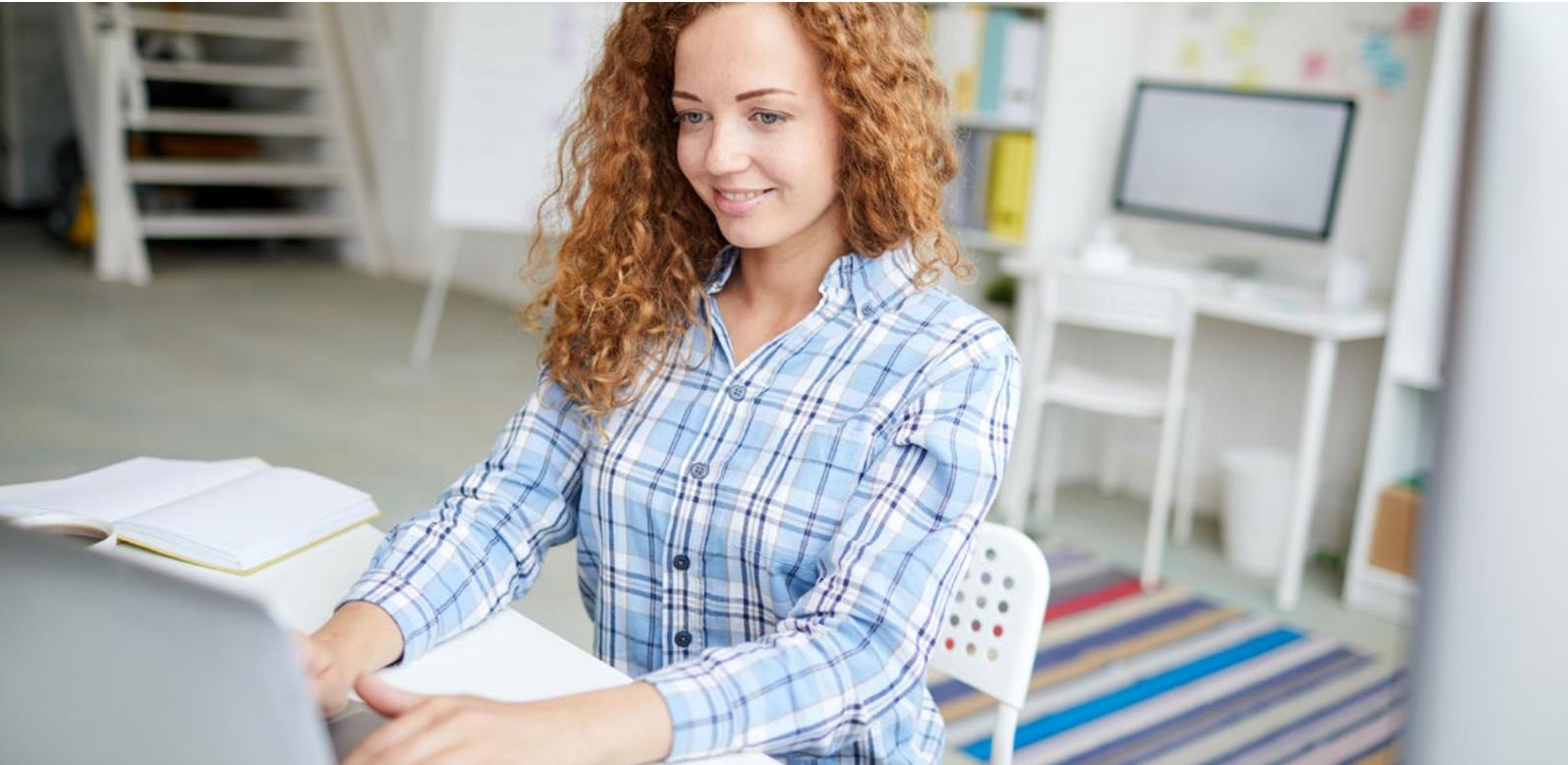


How **COVID-19** is changing the way we work



Advice and tips for setting
up a home office





Many employees have been asked to work from home to reduce the spread of COVID-19, however this could potentially impact their comfort, wellbeing and musculoskeletal health.

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) DSE guidance on preventing musculoskeletal disorders outlines the importance of good ergonomics when working from home. Spending too long sitting at your computer can increase the risk of:

- **Lower and upper back pain**
- **Neck pain**
- **Arm and wrist pain**
- **Exacerbating pre-existing problems**

Because many employees will not have a dedicated workspace at home, they will need to set up a home office that is comfortable and provides adequate support for their body. This will reduce the risk of suffering a musculoskeletal problem and prevent aches and pains.

Advice and tips for employees working from home:

1

If possible, use a desktop PC. PCs often have larger screens than laptops and are easier to set at eye level height, making them more comfortable to use.

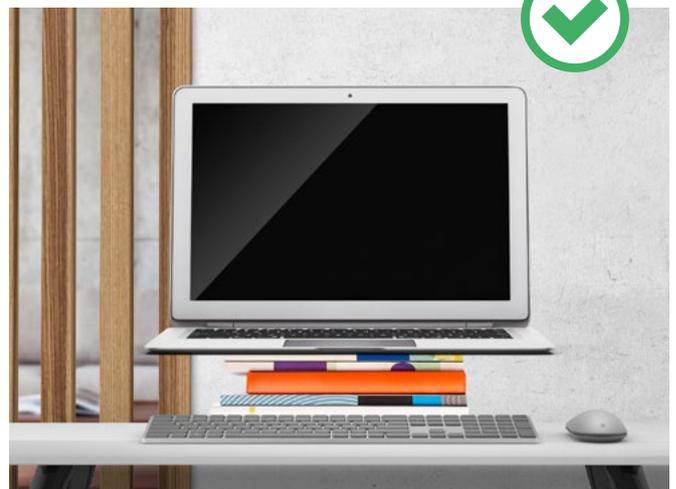


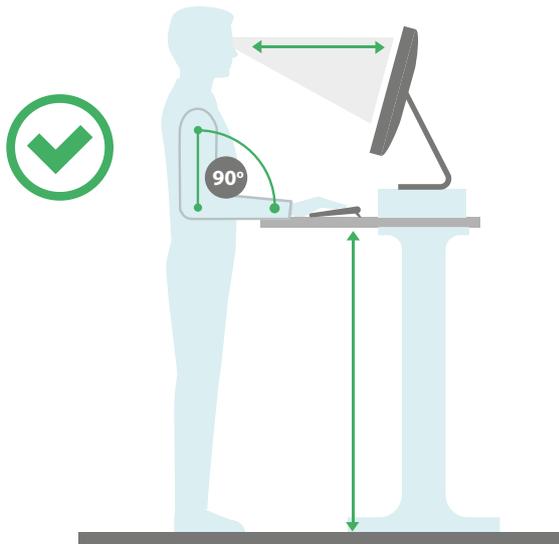
2

Use your laptop safely. If you need to use a laptop, raise it to eye level height using a riser, a pile of books, a box or a tin. If the items are flammable, place a mat or tray between the laptop and the item and do not leave your laptop unattended. Avoid bending forward with your neck and upper back to view the screen by increasing the font size so you can see the text more clearly.

3

Use a keyboard and mouse. If you are going to be using a laptop for prolonged periods at home, you will need to raise the screen and use a separate keyboard and mouse. This helps keep your arms relaxed and not reaching forward. If you wear varifocal or bifocal glasses, you may need to lower your screen height in order to maintain good posture. If you wear glasses specifically for DSE use, you should set the screen height as shown in the diagram on the following page – depending upon how your optician has set your glasses, minor adjustments may be required to prevent you from tipping your head and neck backwards or forwards in order to see the screen clearly.

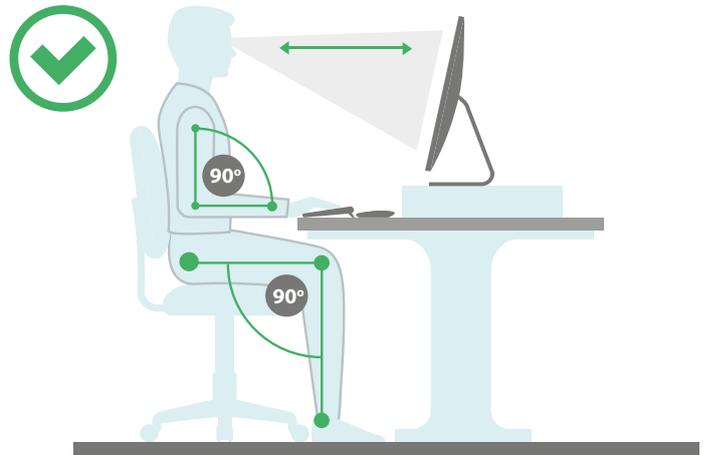




Standing Desk Height

(height of top of lower work surface):

Your standing elbow height from floor minus keyboard height in working shoes.



Sitting Desk Height

(height of top of lower work surface):

Your sitting elbow height from floor minus keyboard height with flat feet on the floor in working shoes.

4

Prepare your chair. If you are not using an adjustable office chair, you will probably need to improve your back support. A rolled-up towel or small cushion placed in the small of the back will maintain your lower back's curve and prevent slouching. If you do have an adjustable chair, familiarise yourself with its controls to ensure it is providing you with the most back support possible.

5

Prepare your work 'desk'. The height of your home table or desk will affect your sitting comfort. Try and have your forearms level with the table and elbows at 90 degrees. Raise yourself up with cushions if necessary and place your feet on a box for support if you cannot place them flat on the floor.

6

Remember to move. If you feel tension or aches building up, try to move around at least once every hour to keep the blood and oxygen flowing. If you are using a laptop, place it on a kitchen worktop or a chest of drawers and stand for 10-30 minutes.

7

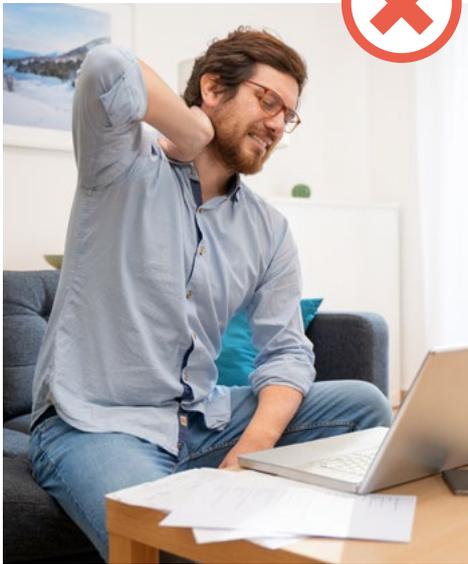
Avoid the sofa slouch. If the sofa is your only option, use cushions to support your back. Use a cushion, books or lap tray to raise your laptop up and protect you from the heat it generates. Stand and stretch regularly to reduce tension and prevent aches building up.

8

Look after your shoulders and wrists. Keep your keyboard and mouse close and avoid stretching forward or overreaching as this increases tension around your neck and shoulders. Keep your wrists relaxed and straight and remember to relax your shoulders.

9

Use your mobile or home phone correctly. Avoid cradling the phone in your neck and, where possible, use a headset/hands free/speaker phone.



10

Keep cables tidy. Remember to keep any cables tidy so they do not cause a trip hazard.

11

Avoid glare/reflection on your screen and desk. Position your monitor/laptop away from windows and indoor lighting to prevent light shining onto your screen or desk.

12

Listen to your body. Without the daily commute you may be missing your usual walk/cycle to work, and it is important to continue exercising for at least 30 minutes each day. Get up and move around for a minimum of five minutes every hour. Run up and down the stairs, do some simple stretches or go for a brisk walk and get some fresh air (remembering to follow the latest Government guidelines and maintain social distancing). Many helpful exercise videos are also available on YouTube but before attempting any, remember to watch them first to check the level of effort that is involved!

So, please look after yourself while working from home...
and remember to take plenty of short breaks!