

# So You Now Work From Home...

## Tips for your mental and physical health:



### 1. Try to maintain a regular morning routine

- ▶ Although it may be tempting to roll out of bed and stumble straight to your computer in your pyjamas, it's best to differentiate between your home life and work life.
- ▶ You don't need to keep all of your routine – decide which elements will work best for you.
- ▶ **Suggestions:** Give yourself a “commute” by taking a walk or bike ride, do a morning home workout like yoga or circuit training, meditate outside for 10-15 minutes...

### 2. Communicate with your colleagues by video chat if possible

- ▶ Even if you can't connect face-to-face in person, chatting face-to-face through a screen can still help you feel connected and reduce loneliness.

### 3. Schedule breaks into your day

- ▶ When working at home without regular social cues or interruptions, it's easy to forget to take breaks.
- ▶ Consider using a timer, Microsoft Outlook Calendar reminders, an activity monitor watch, or an hourglass to prompt you to take your breaks!
- ▶ Try to follow the “20-20-20 rule” for eye breaks.
- ▶ Micro-breaks to stand up and move at least 1 time per hour are recommended.

### The 20-20-20 Rule

*Reducing risk of eyestrain, dryness, and headaches*



*Every 20 minutes...*

*...take a 20sec break from the screen...*

*...& focus on an object >20' away.*

## Hunching over a laptop is not recommended!



*Hunching over a laptop with arms elevated*

**When properly adjusted, the top of your screen should be at eye level and the keyboard/mouse should be in line with your 90° elbow height (wrists flat)**

- ★ Your elbows and eyes are probably about 20”-22” apart; however your laptop keyboard and monitor are probably only 10” apart... this means you will likely be hunching your upper-body down and elevating your arms while working.
- ★ Awkward postures working at a laptop could contribute to discomfort in the back, shoulders, neck, hands, wrists, forearms, and elbows.
- ★ To maintain a neutral, upright posture the screen and the laptop should be split apart – see the following pages for suggested solutions to creating a home office set-up.

# Home Office Troubleshooting Guide

Symptom	Possible cause	Suggested solutions
Sore low-back	Lack of adequate backrest support, resulting in non-neutral postures such as slouching, hunching, or “perching” on the front edge of your seat.	<p>1. Make sure the seat of the chair is not too deep for you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be around 2 fingers of space between the front edge of the seat and the backs of your knees when your back is touching the backrest.</li> <li>• Contact stress from the edge of the seat on the backs of your knees may reduce circulation in the legs or promote bad postures.</li> </ul> <p>2. Ensure you have adequate back support when seated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add a cushion to the backrest of your chair.</li> <li>• Add a rolled towel or a lumbar roll cushion in the inward curve of your low-back.</li> </ul> 



*Neutral versus hunched seated posture*

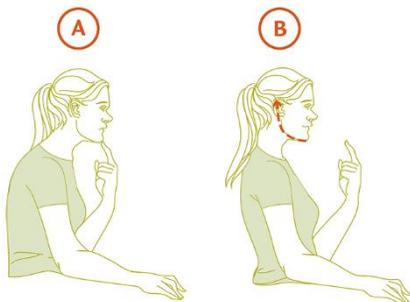
Symptom	Possible cause	Suggested solutions
Sore upper-back or neck	Hunching down to view your screen.	<p>1. Consider procuring an external monitor to be adjusted to the correct height.</p>  <p><i>External monitor</i></p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>2. Consider procuring an external keyboard and mouse so that your laptop/tablet screen can be elevated on top of a riser or a box.</p>  <p><i>External kb/mouse + laptop riser</i></p> <p><i>*Please ensure that your employer allows you to connect external devices to your work computer.</i></p>
Tension in the shoulders	Elevating the arms due to the keyboard and mouse being too high.	<p>1. Try to find a table or desk that aligns with your 90° elbow height with wrists flat and feet supported on the floor. (Most home desks and dining room tables are too high.)</p> <p>2. If this is not possible, consider raising your chair to create a neutral alignment in your upper body and then put a stable box, book, or footrest on the floor to support your feet.</p> <p>3. Consider purchasing a keyboard tray that can clamp onto your existing table or desk surface. Many models are available.</p>  <p><i>Clamping kb tray</i></p>

Symptom	Possible cause	Suggested solutions
Discomfort in the wrists	Contact stress from the edge of the desk or table on the undersides of the wrists <b>or</b> Awkward wrist angle due to inappropriate keyboard/mouse height.	- See section above for suggested solutions on how to achieve the correct keyboard/mouse height.
Discomfort in the arms or elbows	Overly- flexed elbow position due to keyboard/mouse being at the inappropriate height.	- Elbows should be flexed at 90° with shoulders relaxed and wrists flat.  - See section above for suggested solutions on how to achieve the correct keyboard/mouse height.
Discomfort in the hands	Working using the laptop or tablet's overly small keyboard and/or touchpad.	- Consider procuring an external keyboard and mouse that is an appropriate size.  <i>*Please ensure that your employer allows you to connect external devices.</i>

## Don't sweat it if your home office set-up isn't perfect!

Many people find they vary their positions more often when working from home

- ★ Even if none of the positions you work in are “ergonomically correct”, at least they are a variety of different incorrect positions! This will reduce the amount of repetitive strain in your body.
- ★ Oftentimes people will alternate between sitting at their desk, slouching on the sofa, sitting at the dining room table, or standing at the island in the kitchen.
- ★ Please ensure that you seek help from a health professional if you have significant discomfort.
- ★ Remember to perform appropriate stretches throughout the day. Some examples are shown below; however these are general examples and should not be performed if they aggravate your symptoms.



Chin tuck



Standing lumbar extension



Doorway chest stretch



Forearm, wrist, and hand stretches