

HEALTHY LIVING



Make Your Home Workstation Work

If you are working at home more frequently, but don't have a regular home office, it can be tricky to find the right spot. Working at a kitchen table is generally better than sitting on a couch or a bed with a laptop on your lap. Consider a few other changes to create a more comfortable workstation and avoid aches and pain:

Pick a Spot

If you do not have a regular desk at home, working at a kitchen table is generally better than sitting on a couch with your laptop on your lap.

Adjust Your Seat

For those without an ergonomic chair, use a seat wedge to help maintain better posture. Sitting on the wedge makes you tilt your thighs forward and down, which causes you to arch your back and sit up straighter. You can purchase seat wedges online, or you can make your own by folding a bed pillow in half to form a wedge.

Adjust Your Monitor

The kitchen table is often too low for the laptop screen. Try placing large coffee table books or reams of paper underneath to raise the laptop in a stable way so that you do not have to raise your hands up uncomfortably, or bend your head down uncomfortably. Consider purchasing a wireless keyboard, which enables you to raise the laptop screen higher—to eye level—and place the keyboard on the table top, which will encourage better posture.

Create a DIY Sit/Stand Station

The popularity of standing desks has increased significantly over the past several years. You can create your own standing desk at home by simply working at a raised counter (such as in a kitchen) but be sure that the height of the counter does not cause you to bend your elbows too much. You should be able to comfortably reach your keyboard with elbows bent at about a 90-degree angle. While you're at it, consider using a wireless keyboard and boosting the height of your laptop screen to eye level with books, reams of paper, or a stand, which in turn will prevent neck strain.

Don't Forget to Stretch and Move!

Every seated workstation, even a makeshift one, can also be a sit/stand station. All you need to do is stand up every 20 minutes or so and take a break that includes some stretching and movement:

1. Stand up and move your legs up and down as if you are walking in place.
2. Look at an object that is more than 20 feet away for about 20 seconds.
3. Gently shake your hands wrists and elbows for a few seconds while you are also gently rolling your shoulders up, back, and down.
4. Take a slow, deep breath in to improve your posture and smile, then slowly exhale.
5. Sit down, refreshed, in a good posture. You are ready to get back to work!

This information was provided by Scott Donkin, DC, DACBOH, and Scott Bautch, DC, DACBOH, of the American Chiropractic Association (ACA) Council on Occupational Health.

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