

Working from home? Posture, ergonomics can make it safe

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(HealthDay)—If you're working from home because of the coronavirus

pandemic and expect to keep doing so, you need to be sure your work station is set up properly, an orthopedic specialist says.

You also need to take regular breaks to move around, according to Terrence McGee, a physical therapist at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore.

In an office, many people have ergonomic support and opportunities for physical breaks. You might have walked to the water cooler or [coffee machine](#), attended meetings or walked to co-workers' desks, he noted in a university news release.

To help you adapt to working at home, McGee has some suggestions to improve the safety and comfort of your workspace.

When sitting at your desk, rest your feet flat on the floor. Use a foot rest if the desk height can't be adjusted.

Your thighs should be parallel to the ground, with a two-finger space between the back of the knees and the chair, and 3 to 6 inches of space between your thighs and the desk/keyboard.

Place a small pillow or towel roll behind you for lower back support, he suggested. Your head should be level, facing forward, and in line with your torso.

The top of your computer screen should be at or slightly below eye level. The screen itself should be 18 to 28 inches from your eyes, or at arm's length. If you feel you need to bring your eyes closer to your screen, consider seeing an eye doctor for an eyeglass prescription, or make your screen's text larger, McGee said.

If you use a dual monitor, swivel your body in your chair rather than

constantly turn your head to view the monitors. If you can't adjust your chair, consider changing the orientation of the monitor from landscape to portrait.

When using the keyboard and mouse, relax your shoulders and place your forearms parallel to floor. Your wrists should rest in a neutral position (hand in line with wrist and forearm). Use soft pads or a wrist rest as needed, and keep the mouse within easy reach and next to the keyboard. Adjust mouse sensitivity for light touch. A cordless mouse is the best option, McGee noted.

Also, use a hands-free headset if you're on the phone for more than two hours a day, and use a document holder to secure papers when typing.

It's not good for your physical or mental health to stay seated all day. Stand and move from your chair at least once an hour, McGee advised.

Also, perform desk stretches or [chair](#) yoga in between work tasks, he added.

More information: Boston University offers more [ergonomic tips for working at home](#).

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