

Working from home? Here's how to preserve your posture

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If you're working at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, you need to

have a work space that's doesn't cause pain or discomfort in your back, neck or legs, a spine specialist says.

"Most couches may not provide the same type of support and contour as an ergonomic office chair, so your back and neck may stay in a fixed, stressed [position](#) for a long period of time, creating strain on certain tissues that can then cause pain," said Dr. Wyatt Kupperman, an assistant professor of psychical medicine and rehabilitation at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

If you don't have an ergonomic office chair at home, place household items such as a towel, pillow or paper towel roll on a chair to provide lumbar support while working at a desk, table or counter. It's best to use a chair that has both support and cushioning.

Maintain proper posture by sitting in your chair all the way back to where your feet are flat on the floor or supported slightly in front of you, Kupperman said.

Your knees should be flexed in front of the [chair](#) in a neutral position, your shoulders supported over your hips, and your arms should be at your sides (on armrests if possible) with a 90- to 120-degree angle at the elbow.

"In a general sense of mechanics at your desk, you want to be comfortable while you're working. Sit-to-stand desks are popular because they allow you to transition your posture from sitting to standing, which can provide some benefit and alleviate prolonged time in one position," Kupperman said in a Baylor news release.

You should place your [computer screen](#) at eye level or slightly above eye level in order to maintain a neutral neck position.

"Generally, if people can maintain good posture through work with short breaks and an aerobic exercise program they can hopefully avoid poor [posture](#) and back pain," Kupperman said.

"If you're not able to manage [pain](#) symptoms on your own with over-the-counter medications or measures such as stretching that you have previously taken to manage episodes, it's reasonable to reach out to your primary care physician or specialists" for possible prescription medications or other therapies, he said.

More information: For more on home office ergonomics, see the [American Occupational Therapy Association](#).

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