



## INTRODUCTION



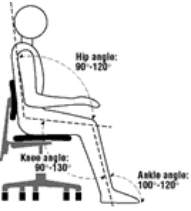
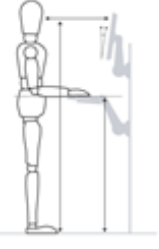

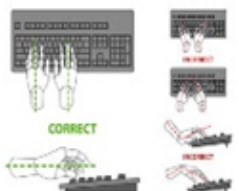
Computers are an essential part of most work roles these days and ensuring appropriate use of these devices is imperative to maintaining your long term health, productivity and efficiency. Below are some tips for caring for your health while using desk based computers and laptops but the most important factor is taking regular breaks!

## WHAT ARE THE FACTS?

- Prolonged sedentary behaviour has a clear and negative impact on health. This can include prolonged sitting or static standing (standing still).
- Regular movement such as gentle walking or stretching has the most consistently demonstrated positive impact on office based workers health and wellbeing over sitting, standing or even a combination of both.
- Injuries relating to poor posture and poor ergonomics are still common, but with increased awareness, early intervention programs and better ergonomics, their severity is decreasing.



## SETTING UP YOUR WORKSTATION

<p><b>Sitting</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sit with your bottom back on the chair rather than sitting on the front edge.</li> <li>➤ Periodically check your posture to ensure you are not slouching, leaning or sitting with your chin poked forward.</li> <li>➤ Fidget when you sit, tap your feet, swivel in your chair, stretch your arms</li> <li>➤ The longer you sit still the more likely you are to fatigue and to slouch - be diligent in taking your breaks and get up out of your chair at least every 30 minutes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Standing</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ For some people, breaking up sitting with periods of standing is a helpful strategy to relieve postural strain. If you are standing during your work make sure you wear well cushioned and supportive shoes.</li> <li>➤ Take regular breaks from a standing posture – don't stand for more than 45 minutes at a time.</li> <li>➤ Fidget when standing, sway from side to side, tap your feet, swing your arms.</li> <li>➤ Listen to your body about how much standing is good for you – everyone is different and the real benefit of standing comes from moving rather than just standing still.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Desk</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sit or stand close to the desk when working at the computer so that your arms are relaxed by your side with your elbows near your waist.</li> <li>➤ Adjust the height of your desk so that your hands can “float” over the keyboard without raising your arms, and your shoulders are relaxed when typing.</li> <li>➤ Keep your desk clear of clutter to avoid reaching and awkward working positions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Keyboard</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Improve your typing skills with an online touch typing course such as <a href="#">TypingClub</a> to reduce strain on your neck and shoulders during computer based tasks</li> <li>➤ Use a free floating posture for keying - do not fix wrists to the desk while typing.</li> <li>➤ Keep the keyboard flat so that your wrists remain straight/flat and relaxed</li> <li>➤ If you are reading your screen and not keying, rest your hands in your lap or by your side rather than keeping them on the keyboard or desk.</li> </ul>

### Information Sheet: Setting up Your Computer Workstation

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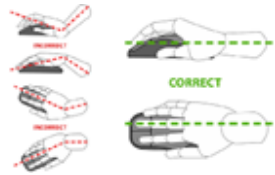
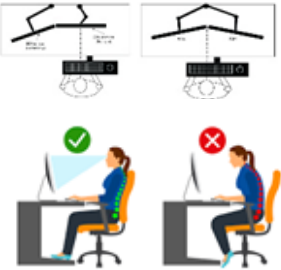
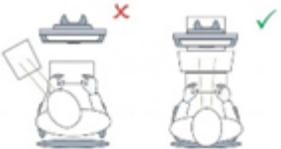



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<p><b>Mouse</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Your hand should be relaxed on the mouse in a neutral position. Do not grip the mouse tightly. Make sure the mouse is the right size for your hand to make it easy to move without tight gripping.</li> <li>➤ Rest your hand in your lap or by your side instead of on your mouse when you are not using it.</li> <li>➤ Use keyboard short-cuts to reduce the amount of mousing you do.</li> <li>➤ Do not plant your wrist on the desk when moving the mouse.</li> <li>➤ Learning to use either hand to mouse and frequently changing between hands is good practice to minimise strain.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Monitor</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Check that you are working with your screen directly in front of you so you're not sitting with your head turned to one side</li> <li>➤ For dual monitors, position your most frequently viewed screen directly in front. If using them equally, position them so that you are directly in the centre.</li> <li>➤ Adjust the monitor height so that you are looking straight ahead at the top tool bar of the screen</li> <li>➤ Ensure the monitor distance is such that you can comfortably read the screen without putting your head forward (this should be roughly an arm's length but everyone is different)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Document holder</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Place any documents you need to view/reference while working at a screen on a document holder rather than on the desktop.</li> <li>➤ Ideally the document holder should be positioned directly in front of you between the keyboard and the monitor. If there is not sufficient space to do this, then position the documents as close as possible to the side of the screen to minimise neck twisting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Telephone</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If you have frequent telephone use or need to use the computer while on the phone use a phone headset so you do not cradle the phone between your shoulder and your ear.</li> <li>➤ If you are on a longer call without a headset, switch hands regularly to minimise strain to the neck and shoulders.</li> <li>➤ When using a hands free option take the opportunity to take a moment to stand, walk or move about while talking on the phone.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Breaks</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Take a posture and movement break for a few minutes every 30 minutes, particularly during seated computer work.</li> <li>➤ Your eyes also need a break every 20 to 30 minutes where your focus is changed from your screen to a distance of at least 10m away. If this is not possible in your workspace, you could sit comfortably and close your eyes for a few moments.</li> <li>➤ Make a habit of taking regular lunch breaks and as much as possible engage in movement such as a walk, during your lunch break.</li> <li>➤ Install Work Rave from the ANU Software Library to support regular breaks.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lighting</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Where possible, adjust lighting levels to be comfortable for you. Everyone is different. Consider using task lighting at your workstation as well as or instead of room lighting.</li> <li>➤ Adjust blinds or the position of your desk and monitor to reduce glare on or behind your computer screen.</li> <li>➤ Consider regular optometry assessments to reduce the risk of eye strain.</li> </ul>

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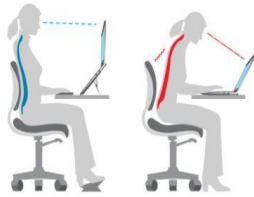
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## LAPTOPS

Laptops have the advantage of portability but there is a cost in adjust ability. When the screen is at the right position for your head and neck it is in a poor position for your arms and vice versa. This results in poor working postures and so prolonged use of laptops, without appropriate supports creates a significant risk for developing pain or other symptoms in the neck, shoulder, arm or back, along with eye strain and headaches



Limit the time the laptop is used to two hours per day (total). Have a break away every 30 minutes to move, stretch and have a visual break.

Avoid using laptop on a high surface as this will result in elevated shoulder and shoulder and upper back pain.

Plug the laptop into a standard desk monitor for laptop use in the office. Purchase a docking station and use your desktop monitor, keyboard and mouse as usual.

For extended periods of laptop use:

- Plug in a separate keyboard and mouse.
- Raise the height of the laptop screen with a laptop stand or raiser.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### At ANU:

- Office Ergonomic Essentials – Pulse online course
- OSLO Network - <https://services.anu.edu.au/human-resources/health-safety/occupational-strains-liaison-officer-network>
- WorkRave software for break reminders through IT <https://services.anu.edu.au/information-technology>

### Useful links for further information:

- <https://www.typingclub.com/>
- <https://beupstanding.com.au/theevidence/>
- <http://ergo.human.cornell.edu/CUESitStand.html>
- <http://ergo.human.cornell.edu/CUESitStandPrograms.html>

