



Ergonomic Adjustments for Employees Working Remotely

Ergonomic Coach Training and Awareness





Objectives

- Review Ergonomic Coach responsibilities and duties
- Review ergonomic risk factors and common signs and symptoms of a developing musculoskeletal disorder (MSD)
- Review “typical” remote work space setups



Ergonomic Coach Responsibilities and Duties

- Provide employees with information regarding workstation adjustments:
 - Advise employee on how to make adjustments
- Provide employees with ergonomic education
- Refer employees with pain or specific physical limitations or barriers to the supervisor
- Complete accurate record of findings and adjustments in the Ergonomic Adjustment Checklist



Ergonomic Coach Responsibilities and Duties

- Report ergonomic findings and observations to management
- Evaluate the success of the changes by doing a follow-up visit/telephone call
- Communicate issues and concerns with your Regional OHS Advisor

Ergonomic Fundamentals



Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders, Risk Factors and Postures

Understanding Ergonomics

Ergonomics is the relationship between an **employee**, their **tasks** and their **workstation / work area**.

- **Employee** – different shapes and sizes; health issues; disabilities.
- **Tasks** – different tasks / activities have different considerations; e.g. length of time; repetition; postures
- **Workstation** - furniture, equipment, and tools required to complete work tasks.



Dynamic Posture

- No single sitting posture can remain comfortable for long periods
- Workstation design, chair design, and job organization should all allow dynamic sitting
- Movement may include slightly altering the angles at the neck, shoulders, elbows, wrists, hips, knees, and ankles

[Dynamic Sitting Posture](#) and [Shortcut Keys](#)



Physical Risk Factors



Posture



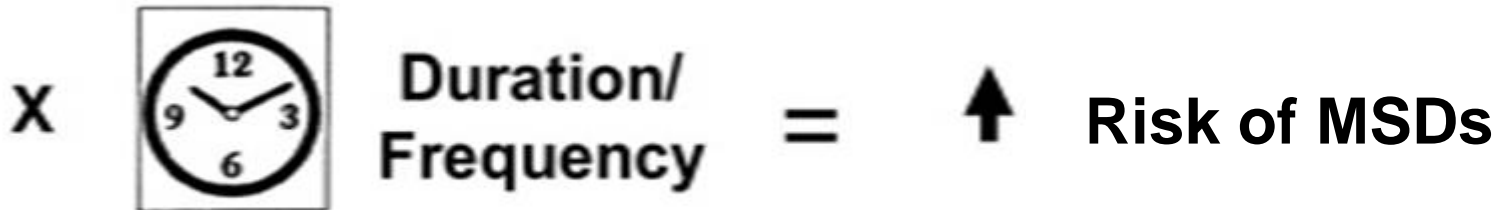
Repetition



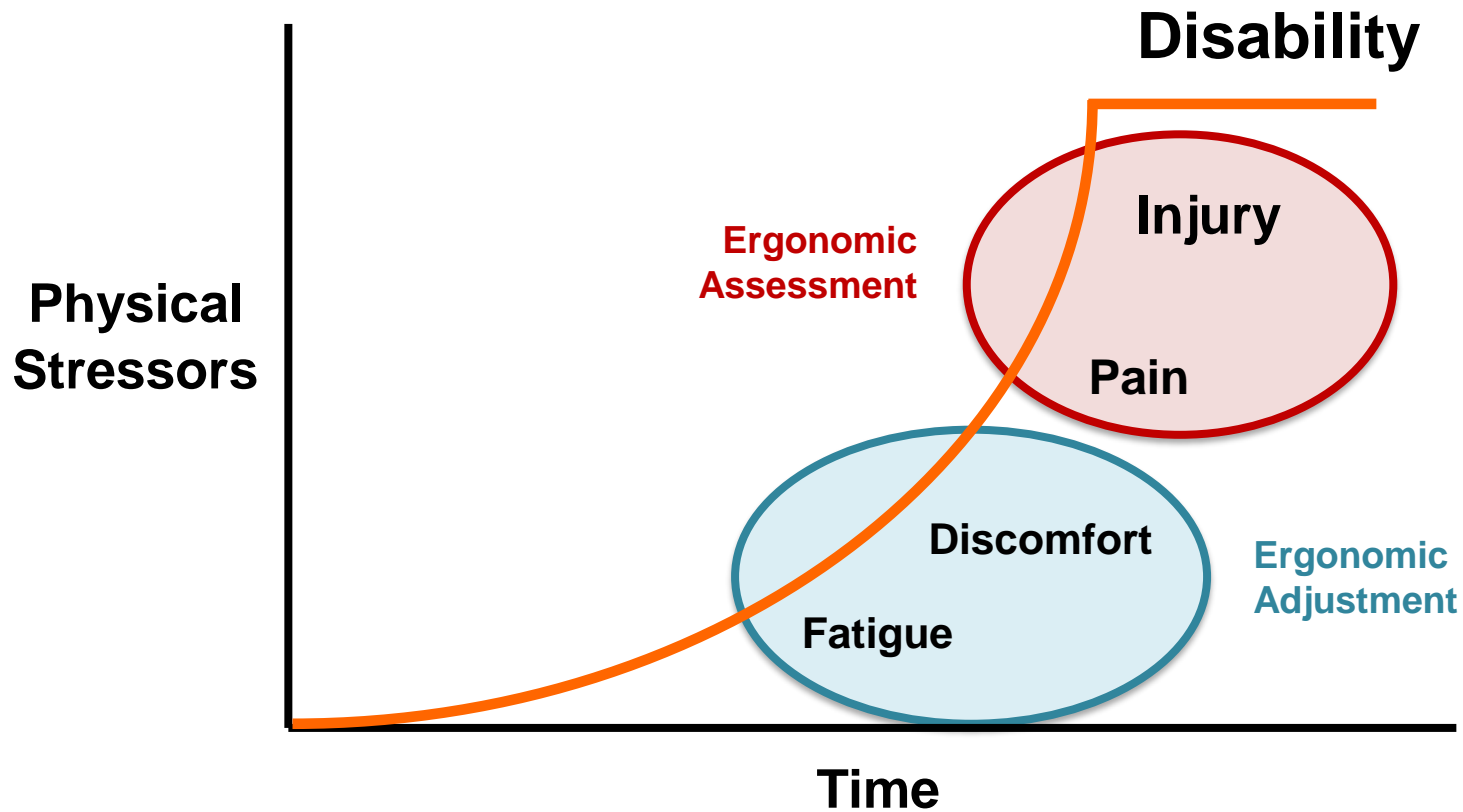
Force



Other



Fatigue to Disability: A Continuum

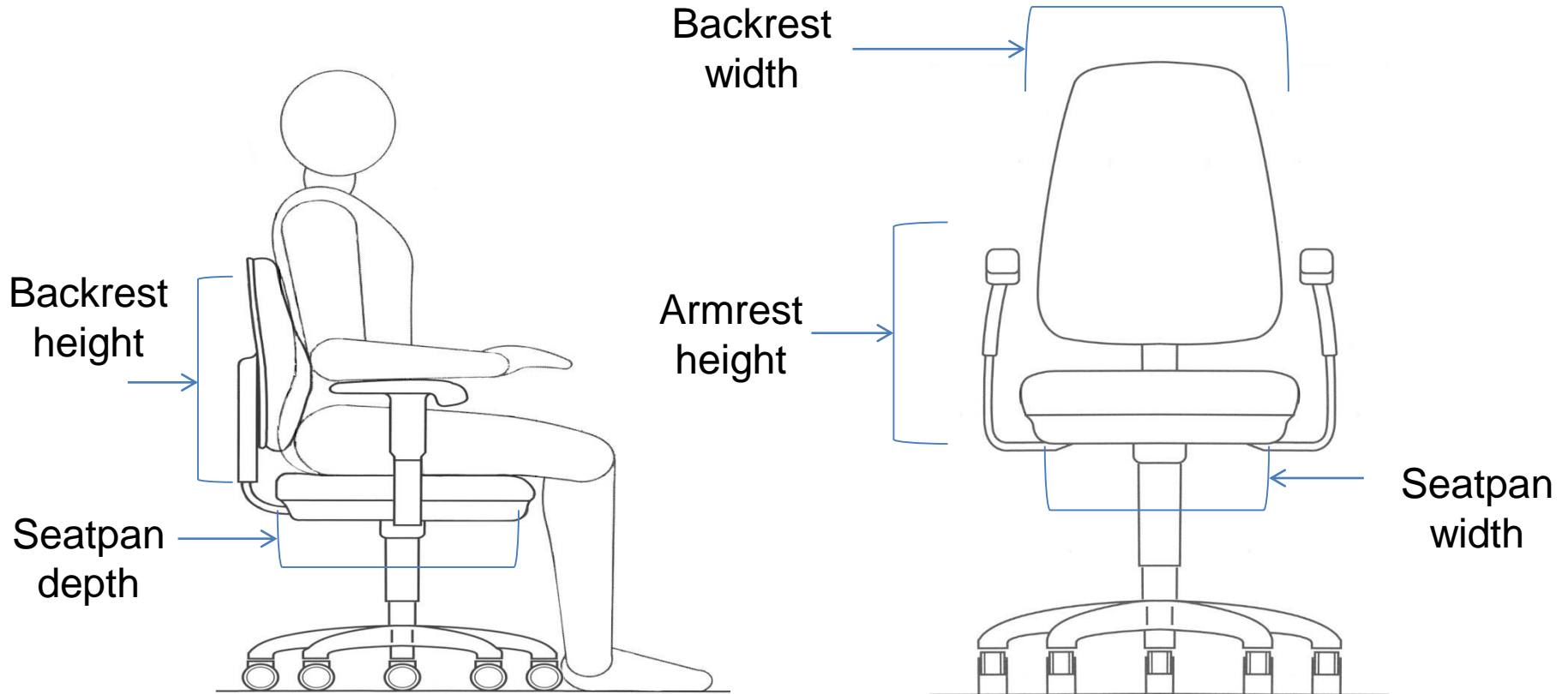


Typical Signs and Symptoms of MSDs

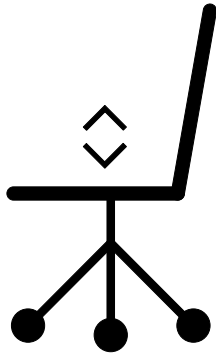
- Persistent fatigue, discomfort or pain
- Swelling, redness or warmth
- Pinching sensation
- Loss of grip strength
- Decreased range of motion
- Numbness and tingling



Chair Features



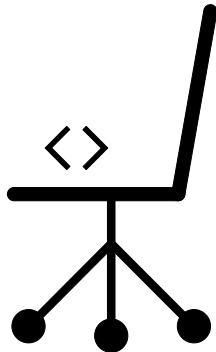
Adjusting the Chair



Seat Pan Height

Stand in front of the chair facing the backrest. Using the seat height adjustment mechanism, adjust the height of the chair ensuring the top of the seat pan is just below your knee cap.

Seat Pan Depth

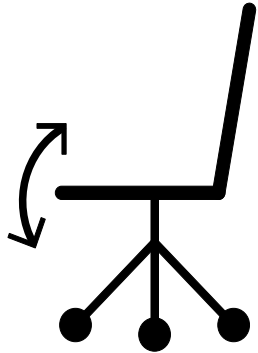


Sit in the chair ensuring your feet are firmly on the floor with thighs parallel to the ground; adjust the seat pan height if necessary.

Inspect behind your knees to ensure there is adequate space between the front edge of the seat pan and the back of your legs; approximately the width of a clenched fist. Adjust the seat pan depth if necessary and if possible.

Adjusting the Chair

Seat Pan Tilt



Adjust the seat pan tilt according to the task being performed. Specifically, forward for close proximity tasks (writing), or backwards for tasks done at a distance (computer work).

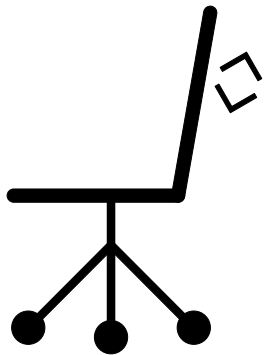
Note: the seat pan height may need to be adjusted to ensure feet remain firmly on the floor.

Back Rest Angle



Adjust the backrest angle appropriate to the task being performed. Back rest angle should be approximately at a 110 to 130 degree angle to the seat pan for computer work and approximately 90 degrees or less when writing at a desk.

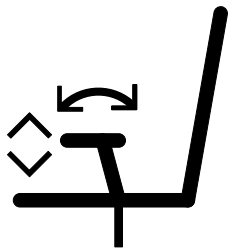
Adjusting the Chair



Back Rest / Lumbar Support Height

Inspect the back rest height and ensure the lumbar support is positioned in the middle of your lumbar curve.

To locate your lumbar curve, place your hands on your hips with your thumbs pointed towards your back. Your lumbar curve will be approximately the height of your thumbs.



Armrest Height / Width

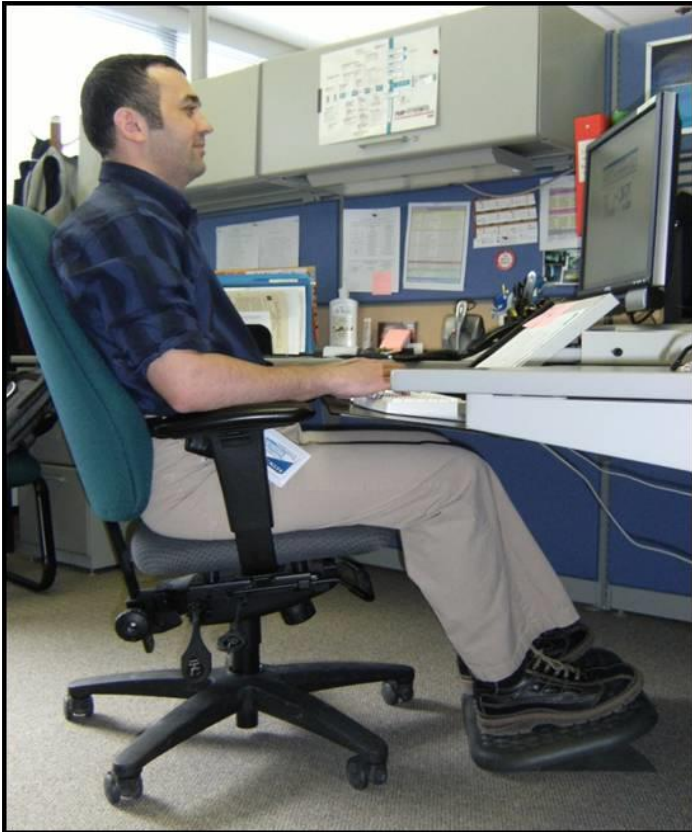
Hold your arms to the side, elbows bent at 90 degrees, forearms parallel to the floor, and shoulders relaxed (no hunching or reaching). Adjust the height and width of the armrests to support your arms in this position.

Work Surface Height



- The height of the work surface should be ensure wrists are straight when keying
 - Keyboard at the same height as elbows
- If the work surface is not height adjustable, adjust the height of the seat.
 - Use a footrest to ensure feet are flat and fully supported.
- Work surface height should allow clearance for lower limbs and posture changes.
- Work surface should provide sufficient space for equipment such as monitor, keyboard, and mouse.

Footrest

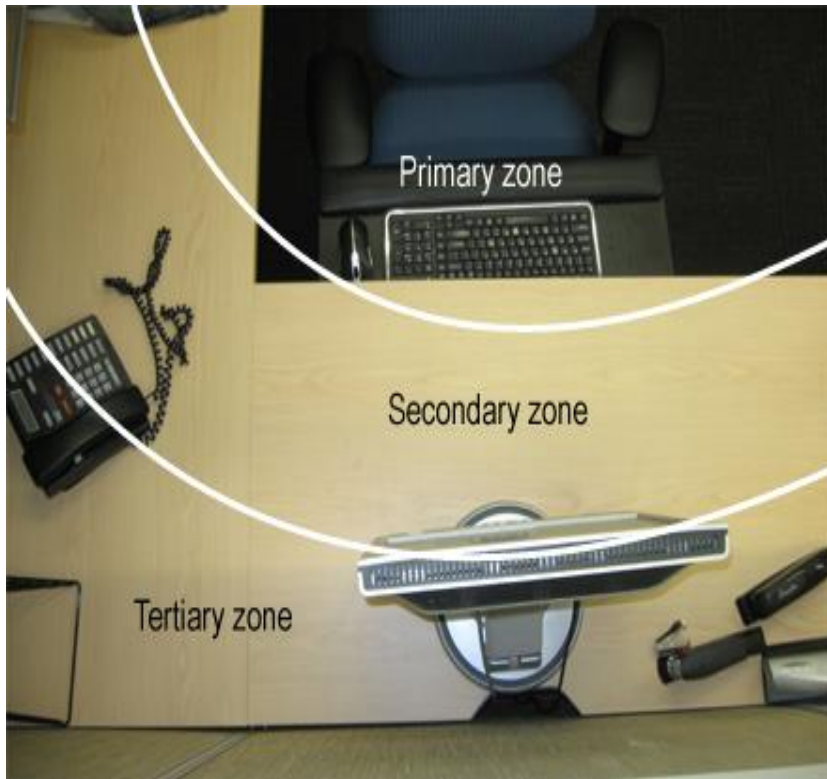


Footrests can be a necessary support when the chair is raised for you to reach a work surface and your feet are not fully supported.

A foot rest should provide firm support to legs and feet and should not rock or move.

The surface of the foot rest should be nonslip and of sufficient size to support both feet and allow some freedom of movement.

Work Reaches



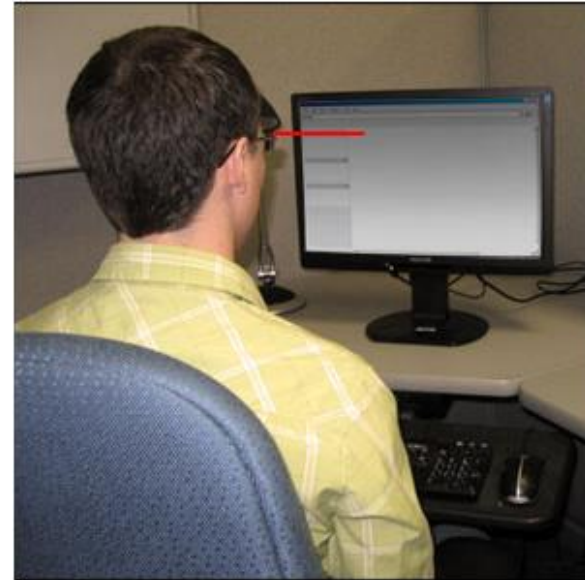
Workstation organization is based on priority and frequency of use of equipment in order to reduce the amount reaching.

Primary zone is for regularly and frequently used equipment (e.g. keyboard/mouse).

Secondary zone is for less frequently used items (e.g. telephone; notebook).

Tertiary zone is for items that are used infrequently (e.g. reference documents; stapler).

Monitor Distance and Height



Monitor viewing distance should be approximately one arm's length away.

Monitor height should allow the neck to be in a neutral position when looking at the top row of text on the screen. Raising the monitor may be required.

Dual Monitors

If one is used more frequently



If one is a laptop or tablet



If both are used equally



Primary monitor(s) should be centered.

Monitors should be at the same height and distance.

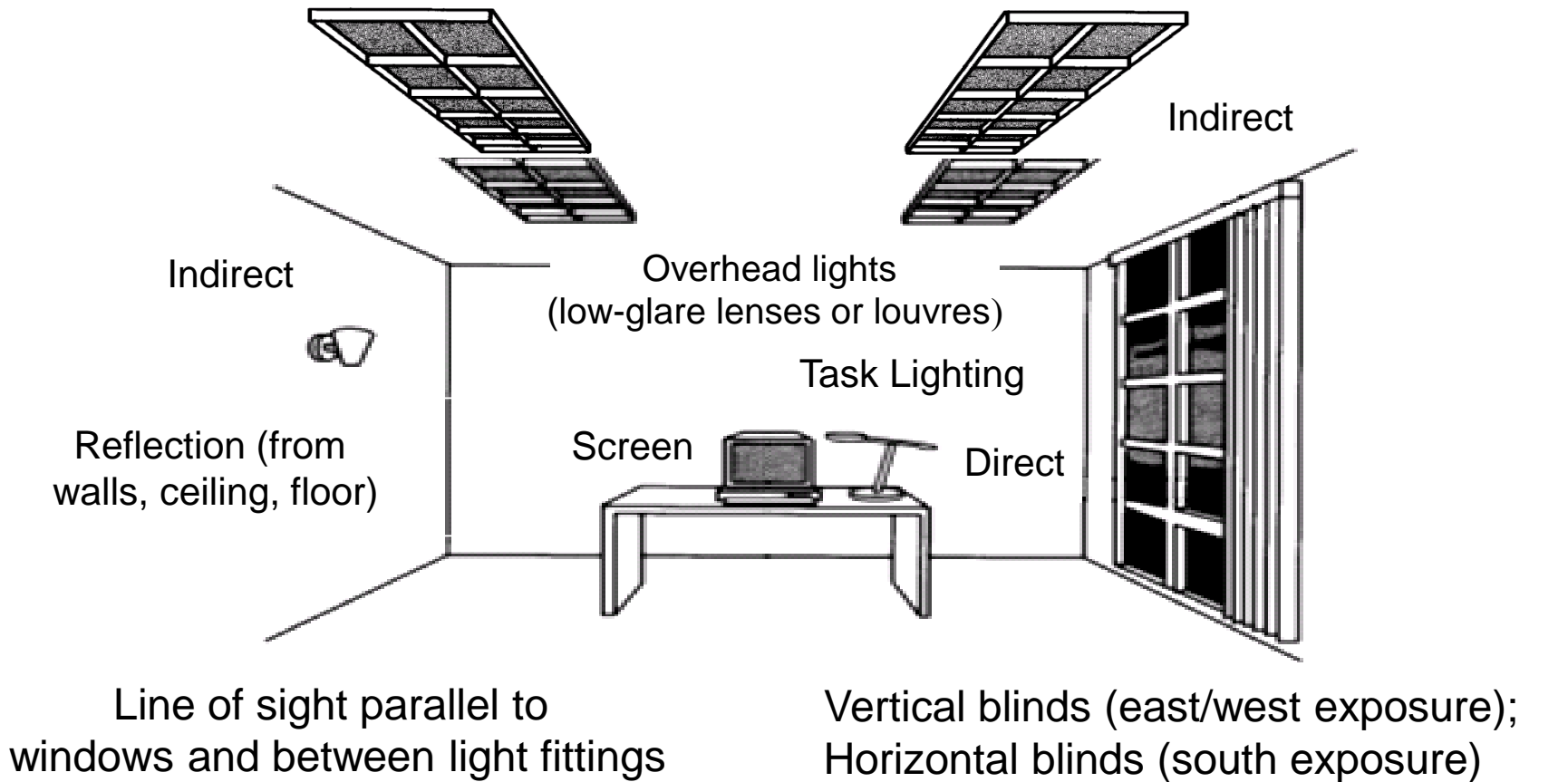
A laptop / tablet should be raised to proper viewing height.

Working with a Laptop



- Raise laptop screen to proper viewing height.
- Use external keyboard and mouse.

Glare Control Measures





Rest Breaks

- Number of rest breaks depends on job demands
- The more intense and repetitive, or the longer static postures are maintained the more frequent the breaks should be
- Breaks can include:
 - Short pauses (micro breaks)
 - Change activities (stand when talking telephone calls)
 - Formal break

Remote Work Setup

Helping employees setup and adjust their existing furniture and equipment



Ergonomic Adjustment Process / Checklist

Ergonomic Adjustment Checklist – Employee Working Remotely

Employee Information

| Name | Telephone Number | Email |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |

| Manager/Team Leader | Telephone Number | Email |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |

| Initial Adjustment | Date of Initial Adjustment |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Click or tap to enter a date. |

Initial Contact

STEP 1: Contact employee by telephone or email to introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the ergonomic adjustment.

STEP 2: Ask the employee:

- a) What types of discomfort they are experiencing, if any?
- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neck | <input type="checkbox"/> Shoulder blades |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shoulders | <input type="checkbox"/> Mid-back |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forearms | <input type="checkbox"/> Lower Back |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wrists | <input type="checkbox"/> Legs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fingers | <input type="checkbox"/> Feet |

Other:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- b) What issues is the employee having with their current work set-up?

Click or tap here to enter text.

- c) Was an ergonomic adjustment or ergonomic assessment completed previously?

Yes No

If yes, what modifications or recommendations were made?

Click or tap here to enter text.

- d) Is the employee currently, or was the employee previously, using any specialized equipment?

Click or tap here to enter text.

If yes, does the employee have the specialized equipment at their remote work location?

Yes No

STEP 3: Request the employee to take some pictures or a video of their remote workspace showing:

- Type of furniture and equipment being used;
- Layout of equipment;
- General posture employed while working
- Side view to show chair posture, keying height and monitor height

STEP 4: Arrange a time for ergonomic consultation once employee has provided the necessary pictures/video and measurements.

Review of Employee Workspace

STEP 5: Review the pictures/video/information provided by the employee.

| Resources: | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nine Steps for Properly Adjusting Your Chair | | |
| Item | | Comments and Actions |
| Are the employee's feet resting flat on the floor AND thighs parallel to the floor or with a slightly downward angle (hips to knees) when seated | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise/lower chair so feet are flat on floor and thighs parallel to the floor or with a slightly downward angle (hips to knees) • Use footrest if desk height requires an elevated chair (see Work Surface section below) |
| Is there appropriate space from the front edge of the seat pan to the back of the knee (about one fist width)? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure chair has a gently curved front edge on the seat pan. • Move seat pan forward / backward, as necessary. |
| Is the <u>back rest</u> adjusted to an appropriate angle (110-130 degrees)? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust the angle of the <u>back rest</u>. |
| Does the chair have an extra lumbar support? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If no, use a rolled towel to provide lumbar support |
| Is the <u>lumbar support</u> properly positioned? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise/lower lumbar support. • If lumbar support is not adjustable independently of the seat back, raise/lower seat back. |
| Is there any space between the employee's back and the <u>back rest</u> of the chair? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure back is being fully supported by the <u>back rest</u> and there are not spaces. • Arrange workstation to allow for full back support (e.g. position keyboard closer; bring monitor closer) • Lower armrests, or swing in or out (if equipped), if they are preventing the employee from sitting back fully. |
| Does the chair have armrests? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Are the armrests properly adjusted and provide adequate forearm support? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use armrests for short pauses from typing. • Adjust armrests to ensure shoulders are relaxed. • Adjust armrests |



Remote Work Setup

Most remote work setups will have issues.

1. Focus on best possible setup with existing furniture and equipment.
 - Adjustment of chair
 - Height of work surface/keyboard/mouse
 - Monitor position
 - Work organization
2. Identify areas of concern
 - Inadequate furniture/equipment
 - Advise employee to speak with their manager



Look for the Following Awkward Postures

- Outstretched Arms
- Overhead Reaching
- Bending
- Leaning
- Raised Elbows
- Bent Wrist
- Slouching
- Turned Neck
- Twisting
- Reaching

Remote Work Setup - Example #1



Observations

Good

- Laptop raised (use of phone book)
- Second monitor
- External keyboard/mouse
- Mouse at same height as keyboard
- Task chair
 - arm support
 - height adjustable(?)
 - lumbar support(?)
 - soft seating
- Headset

Concerns

- Leg/feet clearance

Remote Work Setup - Example #1



Recommendations

1. If possible, find an alternate space to work which provides more space
 - Larger work surface
 - More leg clearance

Reminders

1. If task chair does not have appropriate support (e.g. lumbar), employee can retrieve their chair from the workplace.

Remote Work Setup – Example #2



Observations

Good

- Laptop is raised
- Second monitor
- External keyboard/mouse
- Mouse at same height as keyboard
- Task chair
 - Height adjustable(?)
 - Soft seating
- Headset
- Line of sight parallel to window

Concerns

- Leg clearance
- No arm support
- Lumbar support(?)

Remote Work Setup – Example #2



Recommendations

1. If possible, find an alternate space to work which provides more space.
 - larger work surface
 - More leg clearance
2. Find a more suitable task chair.

Reminders

1. Employee can retrieve their chair from the workplace.

Remote Work Setup – Example #3



Observations

Good

- Second monitor
- External keyboard/mouse
- Mouse at same height as keyboard
- Task chair
 - arm support
 - height adjustable(?)
 - lumbar support(?)
 - soft seating

Concerns

- Size of work surface
 - leg/feet clearance
 - viewing distance of monitor
 - position of mouse/equipment
- Laptop should be raised
- Directly facing window
- Chair is worn on front of seat pan

Remote Work Setup – Example #3



Recommendations

1. Use a larger work surface to ensure:
 - sufficient space for all equipment
 - proper monitor viewing distances
 - leg clearance
2. Use a shoebox/books/etc. to raise laptop to proper viewing height.
3. Place work surface perpendicular to the window for indirect lighting.
4. Find a more suitable task chair.

Reminders

1. Employee can retrieve their chair from the workplace

Remote Work Setup – Example #4



Observations

Good

- Size of work surface
 - Work organization
 - Arm support
- Headset
- Soft seating

Concerns

- Laptop should be raised
- No external keyboard/mouse
- Chair is not adjustable.
- Directly facing the window.

Remote Work Setup – Example #4



Recommendations

1. Use shoebox/books/etc. to raise laptop to appropriate viewing height.
2. Use external keyboard/mouse.
3. Position work surface perpendicular to window for indirect lighting.
4. Find a more suitable task chair with adjustability.

Reminders

1. Employee can retrieve equipment from the workplace;
 - chair
 - keyboard/mouse
 - Monitor (if desired)

Remote Work Setup – Example #5



Observations

Good

- Task Lighting
- Use of document holder
- External mouse
- Task chair
 - Height adjustable(?)
 - Lumbar support(?)
 - Soft seating

Concerns

- Laptop should be raised
- No external keyboard
- Chair has no arm support
- Insufficient leg/foot clearance
- Insufficient working space

Remote Work Setup – Example #5

Recommendations

1. Use a larger work surface.
 - sufficient space for all equipment
 - proper monitor viewing distances
 - leg clearance
2. Use shoebox/books/etc. to raise laptop to appropriate viewing height.
3. Use external keyboard.
4. Position work surface perpendicular to window for indirect lighting.
5. Find a more suitable task chair.

Reminders

1. Employee can retrieve equipment from the workplace
 - chair
 - Keyboard
 - monitor (if desired)





Observations and Concerns

- Should focus on injury prevention and good ergonomic practices
 - dynamic posture
 - organizing work space
 - micro-breaks
 - use shortcut key
 - stretches
- Should not be focused on “purchasing equipment”
 - certain furniture and equipment can be retrieved from the workplace; employees should speak with their manager

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Resources

- [Ergonomic Adjustment Checklist – Employee Working Remotely](#)
- [Adapting and Adjusting Your Workstation \(PDF, 460 KB\)](#)
- Ergonomic Tips for Working from Home
 - [A Comfortable Posture](#)
 - [Tips for Setting up Your Home Work Space](#)
- [9 steps for adjusting your chair](#)
- [Footrest](#)
- [Mouse placement, use and choice](#)
- [Organizing your work with ergonomics in mind](#)
- [Document holders](#)
- [Task lighting](#)
- [Working with a laptop](#)
- [Dual Monitors](#)
- [Micro-Breaks](#)
- [Exercises to incorporate during your breaks](#)

