

# MAKE YOUR WORK-FROM-HOME SETUP MORE ERGONOMIC



## ➔ Let's Get Started



# WORKING FROM HOME

## ➔ Maximize Comfort and Productivity



Ergonomics is the science of designing a workstation to remove risk factors that can lead to

musculoskeletal injuries and allows for improved performance and productivity.

For many, working from home on occasion may have been done from a couch, kitchen counter or even bed. Yet as we transition to our "new normal" of working from home eight hours a day, this can be a real pain in the neck, quite literally. Many of us likely do not have the same workstation setup at home that is available in our typical offices. Here are some easy tips to creating a healthy workspace from home!

### Work from Home Setup Tips

## ➔ Keep Focused During Work Hours



Physical presence does not always equal mental presence. Take the time to personalize

your work space so that it fits your needs. Limit distractions by choosing a quiet work space and by setting boundaries to answer personal texts at specific times throughout the day.

- 1. Designate a work spot.** Find a private space free from distractions that is functional and comfortable.
- 2. Screen placement.** The top of your screen should be in line with your eyes when working, not below.
- 3. Find the right desk height.** Relax your shoulders, bend your elbows to 90 degrees. Desk height should be just *slightly* below neutral elbow height. Books and boxes can help you find that sweet spot.
- 4. Use a wireless mouse and keyboard.** If your laptop is elevated to the proper height to make your neck happy, it will be hard to use the keyboard or mouse without straining your shoulders.
- 5. Lumbar support.** Using a regular chair? Simply roll up a towel or put a pillow behind your lower back.
- 6. Feet on the floor.** Dangling feet cut off circulation.

**Don't make sleep a challenge!** Crawling in and out of bed all day while working confuses your mind, making it difficult to separate work from regular life. Keep the bed for sleep and sex to help strengthen the mental association between your bedroom and restful time.

**Quick Tip!** Need another reason to keep screens out of the bedroom? Looking at a bright screen reduces melatonin, the hormone that helps your body know when it is time to sleep. Keep all screens out of the bedroom for better quality sleep.



# WORK FROM HOME ROUTINES



Working remotely can bring on significant lifestyle changes, which can be challenging as we learn to maintain productivity in new environments. Stick to a routine, take mindful breaks, and set clear transitions just as you would if working in the office. This will support your focus and concentration while working from home.

## Stick to a Healthy Routine

- Morning routine: make your bed, eat breakfast, brush your teeth, shower, change clothes
  - Consider dressing similar to how you would in the office.
- Create a start time and stick to working normal business hours.
  - Consider checking emails at a certain time of day.
  - Turn off work computer and phone notifications during personal time.

## Take Mindful Breaks

Breaks have gotten a bad reputation over the years as a sign of laziness. Research shows that taking breaks such as standing, stretching, grabbing water or a healthy snack, are great ways to refresh oxygen and get the blood moving. Taking breaks allows your brain to regain concentration, become more creative, increase attention and focus, allowing you to stay productive and efficient.

- Physically walk away from your computer at least every 60 minutes.
- Keep regular snack and meal times.

**Quick Tip!** Even being the tiniest bit under-hydrated can affect your mood and decrease attention. Drinking plenty of water throughout the day can help!



➔ **Try it today!** Using the mindfulness practice of **STOP** can help you check in to how you are feeling, what you are thinking, and what behavior you are engaging in.

- S Stop.** Whatever you are doing, pause momentarily.
- T Take a Breath.** Re-connect with your breath in the present moment.
- O Observe.** Notice what is happening, inside and outside of you.
- P Proceed.** Continue what you are doing, or make a mindful shift based on what you observed. Noticing negative thoughts or tension in the body allows insight for adjustment.

## Make Clear Transitions

When working at the office, you had a clear transition each day as you drove home. Now if you are working from home, you no longer have that commute time signaling to your brain that it is time to shift gears to let your brain and body relax. As a result, you may need to be more intentional about moving from work mode to personal mode, as the natural context cues, such as your drive home, are no longer there. Try these example transition routines at the end of your work day:

- Turn your computer off, go to a quiet room and spend five minutes listening to a favorite song, podcast, book or magazine.
- Change into workout clothes and go for a walk or start your workout.

Source: Ergonomicshelp.com, Experience Life, Harvard Business Law, WELCOA

Contact your health & wellness center for more information and to discuss your individual stress well habits today!