

# How do I set up a workstation at home?

When working from home, the model WHS laws still apply. Just as in the office, your workstation must be set up in a way that is safe, comfortable and easy to use.

A workstation that is set up incorrectly can create poor postures leading to musculoskeletal injury and eye strain. The length of time that you sit in these postures also adds to the risk for injury and health problems associated with long periods of sitting.

What you need to do to set up a safe workstation depends on the work you do, your environment and your individual needs. You have a duty to take care for your own health and safety while working from home and must follow any reasonable policies or directions your employer gives you about setting up your home-based workstation. You should also refer to any relevant advice from the WHS regulator in your state or territory.

### Poor Posture

#### Sitting

No use of external monitor, keyboard or mouse resulting in reaching and poor neck/forearm/wrist position

Slouched shoulders with no support at lower back

Feet not flat on the floor and legs crossed

#### Standing

Slouched shoulders and arched lower back

No use of external monitor resulting in neck flexion

Elbows below desk height

### Correct Posture

#### Sitting

Use of headset when using the desk phone (where possible)

Relaxed shoulders and lower back supported by chair

Use of external monitor, keyboard and mouse resulting in neutral joint position

- top of monitor at eye level or just below
- monitor roughly an arm's length away
- minimal bend in wrists
- elbows bent at approximately 90-100 degrees
- mouse positioned parallel to the keyboard

Use an adjustable chair, where possible

Feet flat on floor with legs uncrossed

#### Standing

Use of headset when using the desk phone (where possible)

Shoulders relaxed and elbows slightly above desk height with spine in neutral position

Use of external monitor at correct height resulting in neutral neck position

User of external keyboard and mouse

# How do I set up a workstation at home?

When setting up your workstation, you should consider the following elements, taking into consideration your duties, tasks and activities:

## Your chair

- use an adjustable desk chair, where possible
- needs to allow you to have your elbows level to the height of the work surface with your shoulders and forearms relaxed onto the work surface when working on the computer
- if you cannot reach the floor, use a foot rest for support
- should provide back support including your lower back curve.

## The work surface

- should be flat and large enough to fit all the items you require
- should be at a height that allows sufficient thigh clearance.

## Your computer screen/s

- should be placed in front of you or position yourself between them if you are working off two screens equally
- the top of your screen should be at eye level or just below - you should not need to arch your neck or dip your chin while looking at the screen
- your screen should be approximately one arm length away from you
- where your screen is positioned will also be determined by your eye wear and the size of your screens.

## Your keyboard and mouse

- if using a laptop, raise your laptop so that the top of the monitor is at eye level to ensure you are able to hold your head and shoulders in a comfortable position (you should not be slouched or looking down) and use a separate keyboard and mouse

- your keyboard and mouse should be on the same level, directly in front of you, and positioned at least 10 to 15 cms away from the edge of the work surface to allow for good forearm support when operating the computer
- your mouse should be positioned parallel to the keyboard and keep both arms close to your body to avoid neck and shoulder strain.

## Lighting

- have adequate lighting and position your screen sideways to windows to avoid eye strain and fatigue
- consider how the lighting changes throughout the day and any glare on your computer screen using blinds.

## Access to your workstation

- walkways to and from your workstation should be clear and free from trip hazards, such as spills and cords.

## Electrical hazards

- you should ensure electrical equipment is safe to use, for example, check that cords and plugs are not damaged, and do not overload power points.

## Equipment

- keep equipment safe, well maintained and in good order
- consider in-home safety (e.g. maintaining electrical equipment and installing and maintaining smoke alarms)
- report any faulty or broken furniture or equipment to your supervisor.

# How do I set up a workstation at home?

You should ensure you regularly stretch and move to avoid injury from long periods at your workstation. Here are some quick stretches that can easily be done through your working day.

Remember, you have a duty to take care for your own health and safety while working from home. If you have concerns about the safety of your home workstation set up, you should talk to your HSR and employer. Your employer will be able to assist you in managing any health and safety risks that arise out of your workstation set up.

**Don't think you have time during work? These moves are fast and get the job done.**

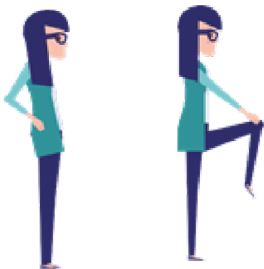


## Leg Stretches

**Why:** To stretch the large muscle groups of the legs.

**Step 1:** To stretch the quads, stand on one leg with your knees touching. Grab your left foot and pull towards your backside. Remember to stand upright. Hold for 20-30 seconds then repeat on the right leg.

**Step 2:** To stretch the hamstrings, stand with the left leg outstretched in front of the other. Bend slowly forward, placing your weight through the bent leg. Keep your left foot pointed upwards. Hold for 20-30 seconds then repeat on the right leg.

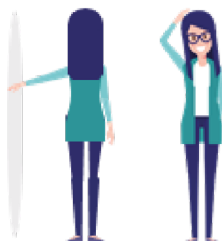


## Back Stretches

**Why:** To keep your back and glutes flexible

**Step 1:** With your hands on your hips, arch backwards. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat 5 times.

**Step 2:** Bring your knee up towards your body and give it a big hug. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat twice on each side.



## Shoulder & Neck Stretches

**Why:** To stretch out your chest, shoulders and neck

**Step 1:** Place your left palm against the wall and turn your body away from it. Hold for 20-30 seconds and then repeat on the right arm.

**Step 2:** Place your left arm behind you and your right arm on the side of your head. Pull gently down with the right arm until you feel a stretch down the side of your neck. Hold for 20-30 seconds and then repeat on the opposite side.