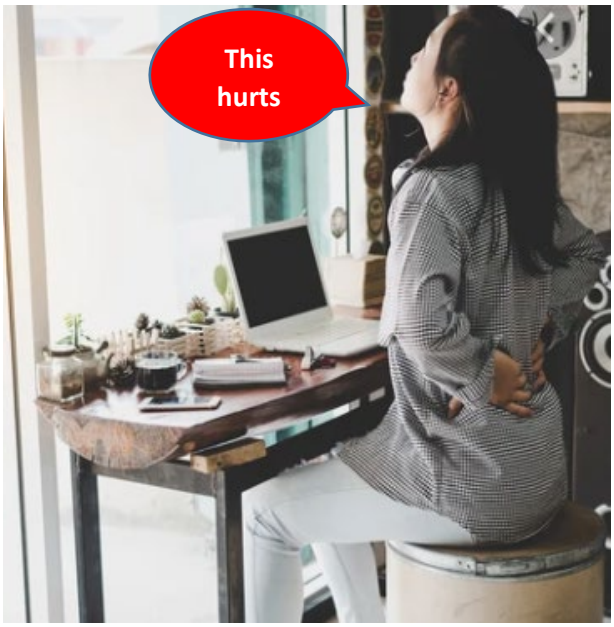
SLAC Ergonomic Guide for Hybrid/Remote Workers

Hybrid/Remote Workers:

SLAC would like to ensure that remote work is conducted safely and productively. This guide is provided because we recognize your current home set-up might be less than ideal. The cumulative effect of working on laptops, cell phones, and tablets may increase the risk of discomfort and pain. To the extent that you can, it is important to set-up your workstation to allow for neutral postures and to take frequent breaks.



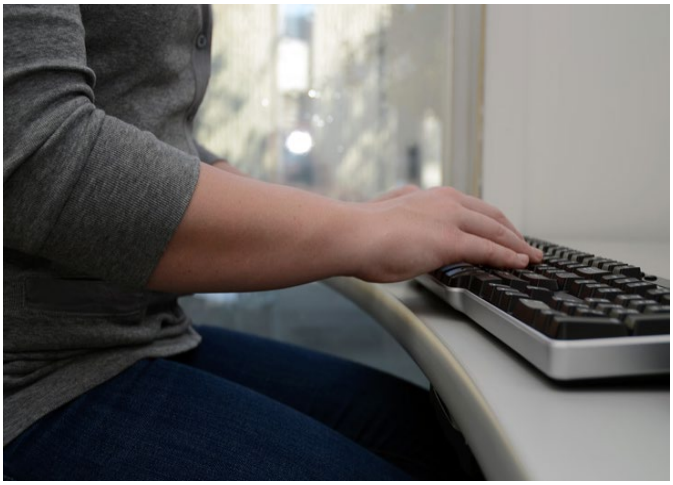
Setting up your Workstation at Home:

Telecommuters are encouraged to review Course 291 - Ergonomics Training. This web based course has good information applicable to home workstations and includes a self-assessment you can take at your home workstation to help improve your current setup.

Equipment Recommendations

Work Surface

1. The keyboard and mouse should be positioned at seated elbow height if possible.
2. Width underneath work surface should allow for a minimum of 41 inches for unobstructed legroom.
3. Ideally the worksurface has rounded edges and does not touch any part of your legs.



Do it Yourself Suggestions:

- Try different options (e.g., If you get uncomfortable at your home office set-up, periodically use a laptop on dining room table or while standing on a countertop).
- Use a footrest, box or book if your heels are not flat on the ground.
- Try using a folded dish towel to prevent your wrists from leaning on a sharp edge.
    - Note, avoid resting your upper extremities on the worksurface. When you are thinking and your hands are not actively working (i.e. computer work, pen & paper, etc.) remove them from the general working area and let them rest in your lap or let them hang naturally by your side.

Chair:

1. Use a chair that allows your seated elbow height to match the worksurface height.
2. Feet should be fully supported, either on the ground or on a footrest.
3. Avoid sitting on the edge of your seat, hips should be back with your spine fully supported by the chair.

Do it Yourself Suggestions:

- Try using a small box, phone book, etc. for a footrest.
- Explore the use of cushions to provide support when necessary.
- Try different chairs – if you begin to feel discomfort, take a break and try using a different chair.
- If needed, use a rolled-up towel for added spine support. The towel should run the length of the spine. Place it between the shoulder blades to encourage a more upright posture when seated.

Monitor:

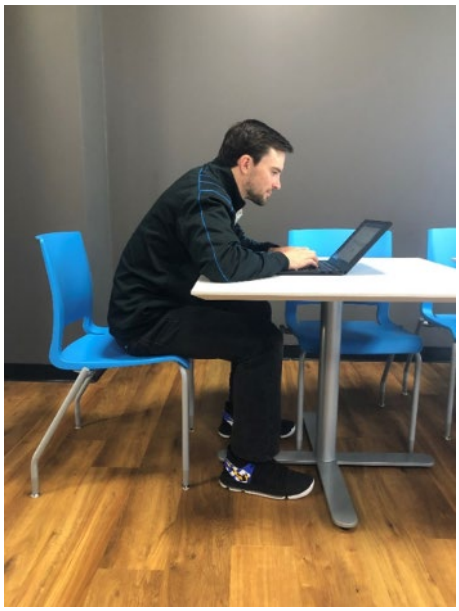
1. Adjust the monitor height so the top of the monitor is just below eye level. Ideally, your laptop is docked into an external monitor. If you do not have an external monitor, raise your laptop to eye level with a riser or books.

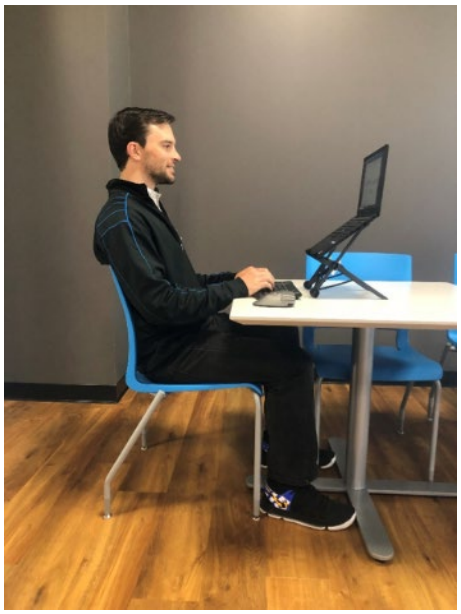
Do it Yourself Suggestions:

- Position your monitor on a small box or book to elevate it.

Guidance for Laptop Users:

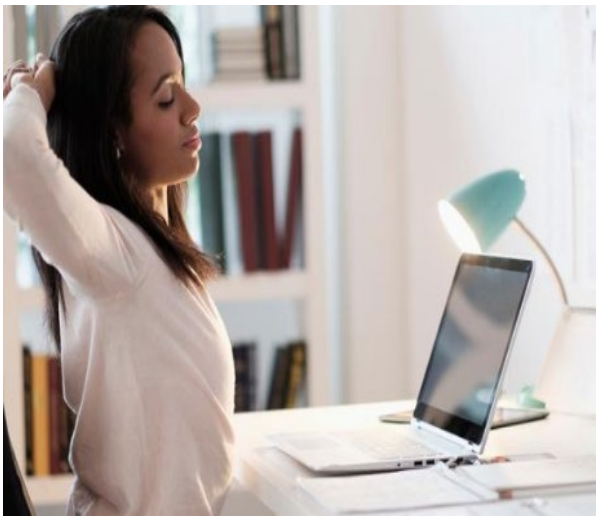
Before: Laptop on a dining room table. Note the forward-leaning posture.	***After:*** Use of a laptop travel stand, external keyboard & mouse allows for a more upright, neutral posture. See Additional Resources below for equipment links.





Breaks:

- Take a one to two-minute microbreak every 20 to 30 minutes to reduce sustained awkward postures and repetitive motions. If working directly from a laptop, break every 15 minutes.
- Breaks are emphasized when using a laptop or other ergonomically-compromised work stations.
- Refer to the Stretching and Microbreaks page for more information.
- Consider downloading StandUp!; a free break reminder app.



Additional Things to Consider When Working From Home:

1. If you have not already done so, complete the required temporary telecommute agreement form.

2. Consider the working environment. Have a designated working area. Set up your desk properly with everything you need, including the necessary equipment and plenty of light.

3. Work smarter – Try and arrange your day so you are not on the computer for multiple hours straight. From video calls to instant messaging apps, there are many ways to keep in touch and boost productivity, as well as enhancing feelings of camaraderie, rather than isolation.

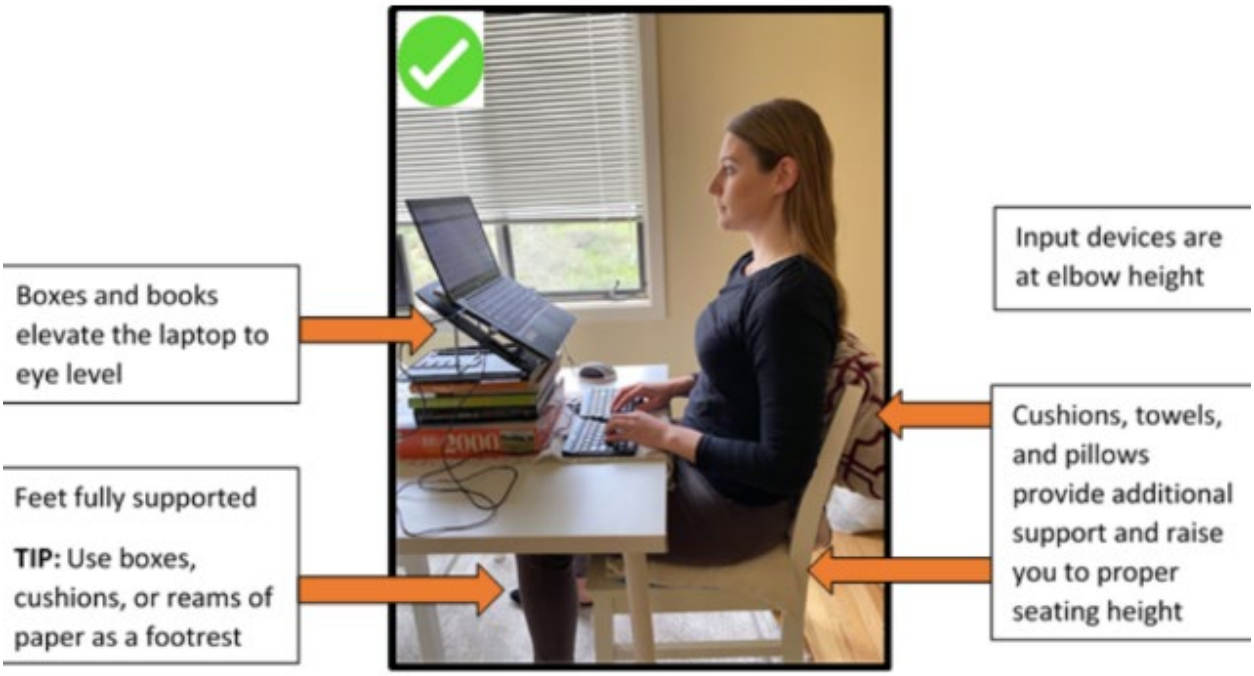
4. Plan your day around when you are most productive, for instance. My brain works best first thing, so I do my creative tasks – such as planning and producing content – then.

5. Take breaks away from your desk too – exercise or walk the dog, especially if you tend to have a working lunch.

6. Keep yourself fueled. Drink plenty of water and eat regular, nutritious meals and snacks to help remain focused.

7. Send an email to ergonomics-slac@slac.stanford.edu if there are questions or you would like to schedule a virtual consult.

DIY Working From Home Examples:



If you Need Additional Ergonomic Equipment:

If you do not have the needed equipment at home or alternative actions don't help you achieve a safe and productive workspace, review the list below and determine what you need. Once determined, send this information to your supervisor and request their approval. Recognize there could be up to a 2-week delay for delivery after the item has been ordered. With your supervisors' approval, contact your department P-Card holder to purchase required items for shipping to your residence (keeping in mind that the local situation for buying and timely delivery of goods could impact the item's utility). Once the equipment is received, you should confirm receipt with the P-Card holder and submit a new temporary telecommute agreement form to property control for the items now in your possession.

When the lab returns to normal operations, all ergonomic equipment removed from the lab or newly purchased will need to be returned to the site and verified.

We hope these resources prove useful to you as our communities shelter-in-place and that you're accomplishing your work not only creatively and productively but safely as well.

Ergonomic Equipment Recommendations

1. Laptop Roost
2. Standard keyboard and Mouse combo
3. GO!2 keyboard
4. Mouse
5. Adjustable monitor stand
6. Footrest
7. Headset and Microphone

Additional Resources:

- Ergonomically Correct Postures (pictures)
- Keyboard Shortcuts: PC, MAC, Excel
- Work at Home Office Safety Checklist
- Tablet/Smart Phone Best Practices
- Laptop Guidance
- Computer Workstation Ergonomics Evaluation Form
- Admin Guide on Telecommuting
- Stanford Telecommuting and Mobile Ergonomics

For specific equipment recommendations, refer to the SLAC Ergonomic Product List Catalog

For additional support, please contact ergonomics-slac@slac.stanford.edu