

The Temporary Homeworker's Guide

| Ergonomics | Productivity | Mental Health |



Preface

Within this e-book you will find resources to optimize your home workstation, making it ergonomically friendly, with common household furniture if you do not have the ideal equipment to hand. This guidance will align you as close as possible to the DSE guidelines set by the HSE.

We will also share some healthy 'working from home' habits and some great productivity advice as well as exploring how you can take care of your own mental health and look out for others around you.

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Your workstation

Setting up a workstation at home may be more complicated if you need to work from home and do not have all the correct equipment. If this is the case you will need to adapt what you do have to make it work in the short term, until a better solution can be provided.

- ✓ Choose a flat stable surface you are able to get your legs underneath (Kitchen table or dressing table)
- ✓ Ensure your chosen workstation is away from glare reflections, that can be harmful to your eyes.
- ✓ It is recommended to set up your workstation in an area away from where you relax, if you can.



Chair Set-up & Height

If you do not have a typical office chair you might need to **adapt** a chair you do have at home to make you comfortable.

Your chair height should position you so that your **fingers float above the keyboard** when your arms are **parallel** to the floor. If you are too low put some **cushions** underneath you to **raise your height**.

If your feet come off the ground, find something solid to rest your feet on. Your feet should take **even weight** distribution. Try to make sure your knees are lower than your hips. This encourages **good posture** and ensures sufficient blood-flow to the lower legs.

Chair Distance & Comfort

Move your chair to the distance where your fingers are floating above the A – L row of the keyboard.

If you have back support that is upright on your chair keep your back in contact with it. You can use a cushion to support you if you need.

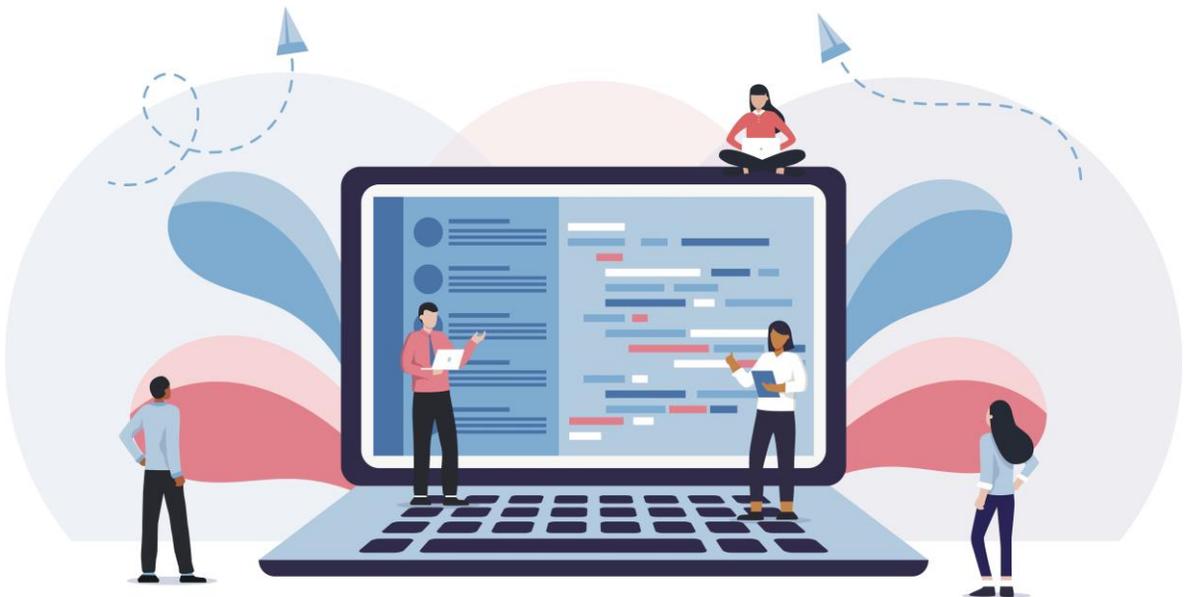
If you are sitting on a stool or a chair that isn't as comfortable for you as the one at your office make sure to get up and move around more frequently (at least every 20 minutes). If you do not have anything fit to adapt in the short term let your employer know.



Working From a Laptop

If you are using a laptop for over **20 minutes** you will need to raise your screen to eye level, if you do not have a purpose made laptop stand, you can use **large books** or any other flat items. Once you have raised your screen ensure you plug in a **separate** keyboard and mouse.

- ✘ Avoid using your touch pad for over 20 minutes
- ✘ Using a laptop on your lap for extended periods of time can be really bad for your posture



Workstation Set-up

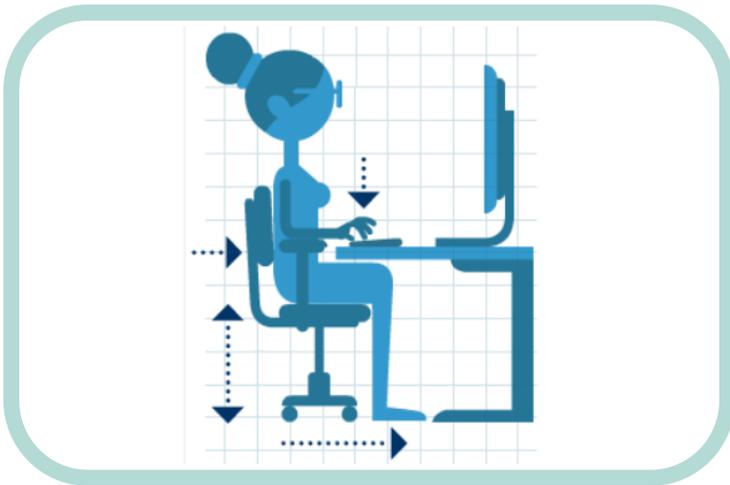
- ✓ Ensure your screen is **directly** in front of you
- ✓ **Raise your screen** to eye level
- ✓ Your screen should be at about an **arms length away** from you

These adjustments are critical to ensure correct posture and will considerably **reduce your risk** of developing musculo-skeletal issues. This still applies if you are using a sit-stand desk.

Your Keyboard should be placed approximately **10cm** from the edge of the desk and your mouse as close as possible to your keyboard to avoid over-reaching.

See next page for diagrams to assist you with your set-up

Use these diagrams to Adjust your equipment

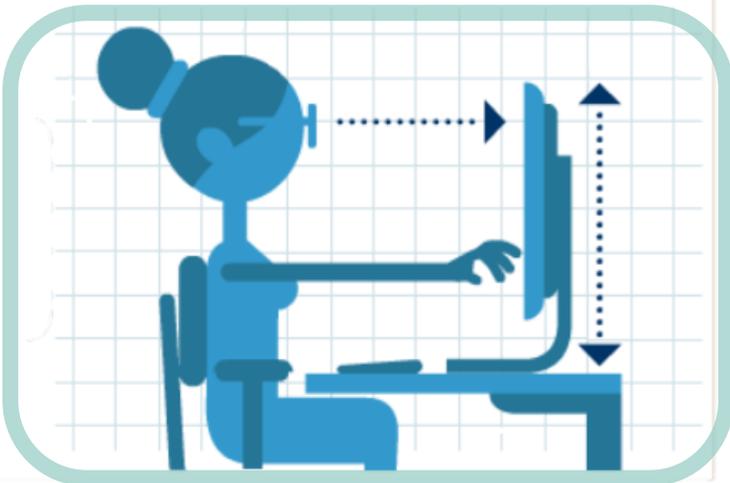


Chair Height:

Fingers floating above keyboard, arms parallel to floor and feet on the ground or resting on something solid

Back support:

If you have back support on your chair keep in contact with it (it should be upright or slightly back from upright)

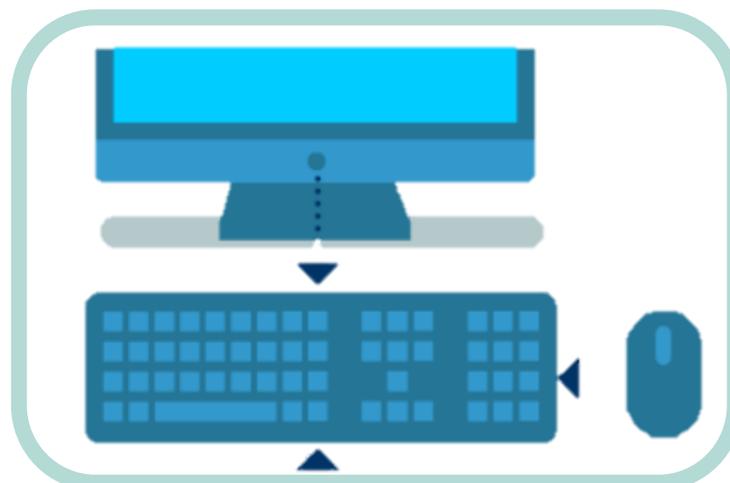


Monitor Alignment:

Top of screen at eye level

Monitor height & distance:

Top of the screen at eye level and arms length away



Keyboard:

Placed centrally between you and the monitor (10cm from desk edge)

Mouse:

As close to the keyboard as possible

Boost Your Productivity

Take regular short breaks:

- ✓ Increase Focus
- ✓ Improve Mental Health
- ✓ Inspire Creativity
- ✓ Encourage Healthy Habits
- ✓ Enhance Engagement



Set Objectives for the day:

- ✓ Plan Ahead
- ✓ Quality over Quantity
- ✓ Prioritise tasks

Eat The Frog

The Frog is the task that you need to do, but don't want to do. The sooner you get these tasks **out of the way** the sooner you can make time for the more **engaging tasks**. If you don't eat the frog you could **waste time** procrastinating or delaying other important tasks.

Healthy Habits



- ✓ Identify the time of day you are usually **most productive** in order to achieve your daily objectives
- ✓ Do something at the end of your work day to **separate** it from your home-life (e.g. Exercise or a change of clothes)
- ✓ **Listen to your body**, if you feel uncomfortable adjust something or get up and move around for a couple of minutes
- ✓ When on the phone, use the opportunity to stand up a **walk around**
- ✓ Make time for **exercise** and healthy eating during the day



Mental Health

During times of uncertainty or when significant changes occur, people can be more susceptible to suffering with poor mental health.

Working from home at short notice with improper equipment, new communication systems and possibly spending many days without real human interaction can cause anxiety, loneliness and worry.

If you have concerns that your working arrangements are impacting your mental health, communicate your concerns to your manager so you can be provided with the support you need – do not allow any condition that is negatively impacting your mental health to carry on for extended periods of time.

We are all here to support each other!

Mental Health Awareness

Being aware of yourself and others can help identify poor mental health early so support can be provided sooner.

Signs you can look out for in others:

- Low concentration
- Higher than average absence
- Working excessively long hours every day
- Short temper or high impatience
- Behavior that is out of character

Signs you might recognise in yourself:

- Skin problems
- Irritability and lack of patience
- Low energy or feeling run down
- Difficulty sleeping and relaxing
- Tearful for no apparent reason

During this time it is good to **support each other**. If you notice these behaviors in others, try to **reach out** and offer support.

If you are aware that **your** mental health is suffering and you are experiencing very low moods, **talk to your doctor** or your manager.

Managing Mental Wellbeing

There are a number of techniques you can use to overcome negative feelings such as mild anxiety or low mood:

Keep a routine: When you are working from home it is important to keep elements of **structure** in your day. Still shower and **get dressed** in the morning, even if you are wearing casual clothes and try to start and finish work at a **similar time** as you did when you were at the office.

Stay connected: If you are currently self isolating, your human interaction is likely to be very minimal at this time, which is why it is really important to **keep in contact** with friends and family.

Exercise: Exercise can boost your mood as it raises **endorphin** levels. The NHS advise **150 minutes** of activity each week and have recognised that exercise can help combat mild to moderate depression.

Practicing mindfulness: This is not a quick fix method, it takes practice, and confronting **negative thought processes** can be difficult at first, but it will address the root cause of the problems rather than mask them. [Learn more here.](#)

Mental Health Resources

Be Proactive For Your Mental Health

Managing Unhelpful Beliefs

Try NOT to Use These Words

Help to Improve Poor Mental Health

Deep Breathing Exercise



