



Make it **safe.**  
Make it **home.**



# ERGONOMICS CHECKLIST FOR OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS

Attention laptop users: Additional care must be taken with respect to your laptop setup. Refer to [Ergonomics and Laptop Usage](#) for instructions on how to set up your laptop properly then return to this ergonomics checklist for review of basic office ergonomics principles.

During our working day, most of us spend a large percentage of time performing computer tasks. Often, awkward postures occur without notice. Therefore, it is important to evaluate and adjust our computer postures on a periodic basis.

- This checklist is based on office ergonomics principles and is designed as a step-by-step process to achieving good posture while working at a computer.
- As you complete each step, check off the appropriate box; **Yes** or **No**.
- Upon completion, review this checklist with your supervisor/manager to determine next steps.

**Helpful hint:** Pair up with a colleague in your work area and assist each other with the completion of this checklist.

# Office ergonomics principles

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## STEP 1: FEET ARE SUPPORTED



Your feet should be positioned flat on the floor.

Are your feet properly supported?

Yes

No



OR positioned on a footrest.

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## STEP 2: THIGHS ARE HORIZONTAL



When you are seated, your thighs should be horizontal to the floor.

Are your thighs horizontal?

Yes

No



If you are unsure, stand facing your chair. The seat should be positioned just below the kneecap.



If you are unable to adjust your chair to this height, try positioning your feet on a footrest.

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### STEP 3: THIGHS ARE SUPPORTED



It is important that your chair have adequate seat depth to support your thighs.

Are your thighs adequately supported?

Yes

No



If you are unsure, sit back in your chair and check if there is a small space (2-4 fingers) between the end of your seat and the back of your knees (as shown in the photo).



An example of a small space.

See [Appendix A, sub section A](#) for solutions on:

- Space too big.
- Space too small.

## STEP 4: KNEES ARE BENT AT APPROXIMATELY 90 DEGREES



The positioning of your knees while seated is an important factor in achieving a good low back posture.

Are your knees bent at approximately 90 degrees?

Yes

No



If you are unsure how to achieve a 90° knee angle, try the following:

Place your feet flat on the floor, while seated, so that they are positioned directly under your knees. This will only result in a 90° knee angle if the seat is already adjusted to your height.

Alternatively, use a footrest to achieve the proper knee posture.



If a 90° knee angle does not feel natural, shuffle your feet slightly forward. This new angle is acceptable as long as you do not exceed a 110° knee angle. (The adjacent photo illustrates a 110° knee angle.)

## STEP 5: BACK IS SUPPORTED



Your low back and mid back should always be touching the backrest of your chair while you are using your computer. The backrest should support the natural curve of your back.

Is the natural curve of your back supported by the backrest?

Yes

No

If you feel that the natural curve of your back is unsupported, make the necessary height adjustments to your chair's backrest.

If the chair is not adjustable, speak to your team leader for next steps.

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## STEP 6: SHOULDERS ARE RELAXED AND ELBOWS ARE BENT AT APPROXIMATELY 90 DEGREES



First, lift both shoulders up then let them both drop.

Now that your shoulders are relaxed, check that your keyboard/mouse surface is positioned at your elbow height.

When you are using your keyboard/mouse, do you feel that your shoulders are relaxed and that your elbows are bent at about 90 degrees?

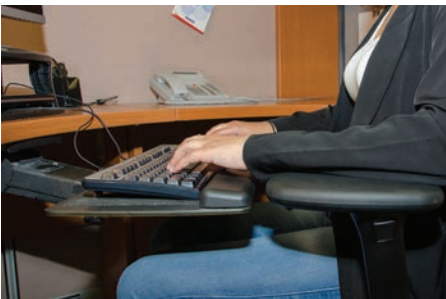
- Yes
- No



If you use a keyboard tray, it should be adjusted, in either height/tilt, so that the tray is positioned at your elbow height.

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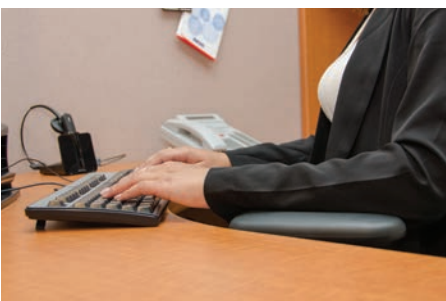
## STEP 7: FOREARMS ARE SUPPORTED



When using your keyboard/mouse (on a keyboard tray or on the desk), it is important that the weight of your forearms be adequately supported.

Do you feel that your forearms are adequately supported?

- Yes
- No



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## STEP 8: ADEQUATE LEG CLEARANCE



Regardless of whether the keyboard is positioned on the keyboard tray or the desktop, there should be a small gap (1-2") between one's thighs and the work surface.

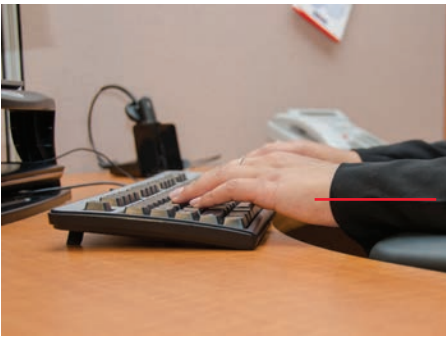
When you are using your keyboard/mouse, is there a (1-2") leg clearance between the top of your thighs and your work surface?

Yes

No

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## STEP 9: WRISTS SHOULD BE STRAIGHT



The wrists should be relaxed while performing keyboarding and mousing activities. If a wrist/hand support is present, it should be used for short breaks from typing or mousing. The wrist/hand support should not interfere with maintaining a relaxed, straight wrist posture (floating wrist position) during keying or mousing activities.

When you are performing keyboarding and mousing activities, are your wrists straight?

Yes

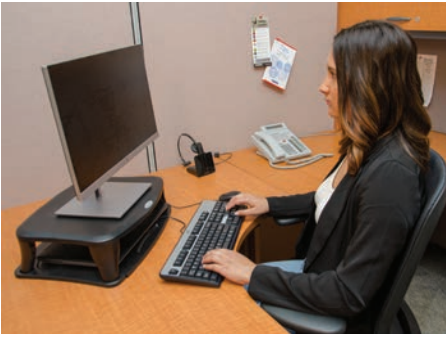
No



If you feel that you are not able to maintain a relaxed straight wrist posture, check the following for possible causes:

- The tilt feature of your keyboard tray;
- Elbow bent at 90° angle;
- The support legs of your keyboard;
- Wrist supports.

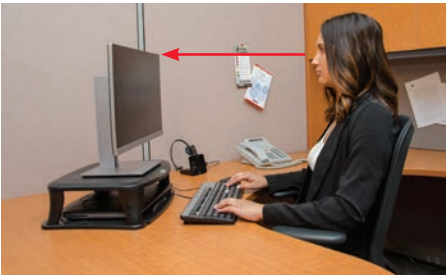
## STEP 10: NECK IS STRAIGHT



The keyboard/mouse should be positioned directly in front of the monitor.

Is your keyboard positioned directly in front of your monitor?

- Yes  
 No



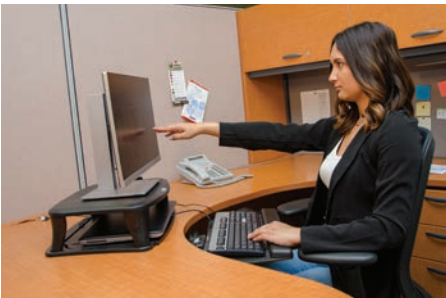
The top of the screen should be positioned at approximately eye level.

Is the top of your screen positioned at approximately eye level?

See [Appendix A, sub section C](#) for solutions on:

- Bifocal/trifocal users
- Inadequate screen height

- Yes  
 No



The viewing distance to the computer screen should be approximately an arm's length away.

Is your viewing distance to your computer screen approximately an arm's length away?

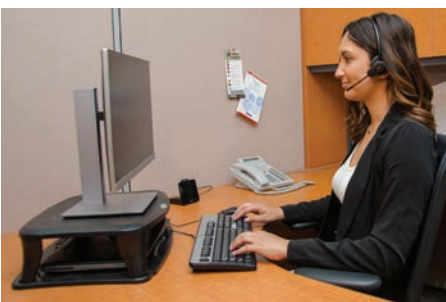
See [Appendix A, sub section C](#) for solutions on:

- Adequate viewing distance

- Yes  
 No

When you are viewing the monitor screen, is your neck straight?

- Yes  
 No



When working on the phone and the computer at the same time for extended periods of time, a headset should be worn or the phone should be placed on hands-free mode if possible. This will ensure that both hands are available for computer work.

Do you work on the phone and the computer simultaneously for extended periods of time?

- Yes  
 No

When you are performing computer and telephone tasks, is your neck straight?

- Yes  
 No



For additional office ergonomics information relating to:

- Proper sitting
- Work organization
- Glare and lighting
- Stretching exercises

Go to the [Make it safe, Make it home](#) site on Intrapost.

For more comprehensive reference material, refer to the following sources:

- CSA-Z412, [Guideline on Office Ergonomics](#), Canadian Standards Association.
- Workers' Compensation Board of Alberta, Office Ergonomics, [wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/public/office\\_ergo.pdf](http://wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/public/office_ergo.pdf)
- Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers Inc. (OHCOW), *Office Ergonomics Handbook*, 5th Edition, [ohcow.on.ca/edit/files/workbooks/24234 OHCOW Office Ergonomics Handbook Website.pdf](http://ohcow.on.ca/edit/files/workbooks/24234_OHCOW_Office_Ergonomics_Handbook_Website.pdf)

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# Appendix A

## Additional information for workstation adjustments

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### SECTION A: THIGHS ARE SUPPORTED

#### 1. Space between front of seat and back of knee is too big.

If the space is too big, try the following:

- Position your feet on a slanted footrest.
- Or... Check if the seat pan can be lengthened. If so, make the necessary adjustments. If not, what is the course of action?

#### 2. Space between front of seat and back of knee is too small.

If the space is too small, try the following:

- Check if the seat pan can be shortened in depth. If so, make the necessary adjustments. If not, what is the course of action?

If the seat pan depth cannot be adjusted to suit your leg length, work with your team leader for next steps.

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### SECTION B: SHOULDERS ARE RELAXED AND ELBOWS ARE BENT AT APPROXIMATELY 90 DEGREES

#### 1. Necessary adjustments to attain 90° angle for elbows while working on keyboard/mouse.

Keyboard/mouse placed on the desk surface:

- If you prefer to place your keyboard/mouse on your desk surface, the first adjustment you will need to make is to your chair height. You will need to raise your chair height until the desk surface is at your elbow height.
- The second adjustment will be the use of a footrest so that your feet are supported when the seat height is raised.

Once these adjustments have been made, return to Step 2 of the checklist and follow the next 5 steps to ensure you make all the necessary adjustments.

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### SECTION C: NECK IS STRAIGHT

#### 1. Bifocal/trifocal users.

- For bifocal/trifocal users, the monitor may need to be positioned slightly lower than the above stated guideline.
- The top of the screen should be 2-3" below your sitting eye level to minimize neck extension when reading the monitor.

#### 2. Inadequate screen height.

- If the monitor is too low, it can be raised by placing a monitor stand or the CPU under the monitor.
- If the monitor is too high, check if the CPU is positioned under the monitor, If so, find an alternate location to store the CPU on the desk surface or under the desk.

#### 3. Inadequate viewing distance.

- An arm's length away is a guideline. Slight variations to this guideline are acceptable if adjustments are made to the font size or if an oversized monitor is being used where the monitor can be positioned slightly further.