

Working from Home: Guidance

The following guidance is designed to advise you on various aspects of working from home in such a way that prioritises your health, safety and wellbeing. There are environment, communication and ergonomic considerations to be made.

1.0 Working Environment

Heating

Your working environment should be at a temperature that is comfortable for you to carry out your tasks, with a means to alter the room temperature and/or dress accordingly should that improve the environment. Ensure also that any equipment you are using at your workstation is not producing excess heat that could cause discomfort.

Lighting

Room lighting should be satisfactory and create an appropriate contrast between the screen and the background environment, taking into account your personal vision requirements.

Any potential glare and/or reflections on the screen or workstation surface should be prevented through appropriate workstation layout and/or the use of screens or blinds.

Noise

As far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that the noise of the environment and that of equipment at your workstation is not in excess so as to disrupt your tasks.

Ventilation

Where possible ensure there is adequate ventilation and air flow for a comfortable environment.

Space

Ensure that your workstation has adequate space for your equipment and for you to change your position and vary your movements as you need to.

Slip/trip/fall hazards

Your workspace should be free of any slip/trip/fall hazards, such as trailing cables.

Power outlets

Ensure there are sufficient power outlets for your equipment, and that they are positioned in such a way relative to your workstation to avoid hazards such as trailing cables.

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2.0 Communication

It is recommended that clear lines of communication are determined within teams and between the line manager and each member of the team. Working from home is a form of lone working, and therefore it is important that regular contact is maintained with each individual's health, safety and wellbeing in mind. An agreed upon form of communication and frequency should be determined and clearly outlined for all members of any team.

3.0 Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

Users are those who habitually use DSE for more than one hour continuously. An inefficient working posture can lead to discomfort and long-term pain, so it is important when working from home that your workstation is set up to ensure you are as comfortable as possible when using DSE.

Figure 1 below provides guidance on a workstation that is designed to promote an efficient working posture:

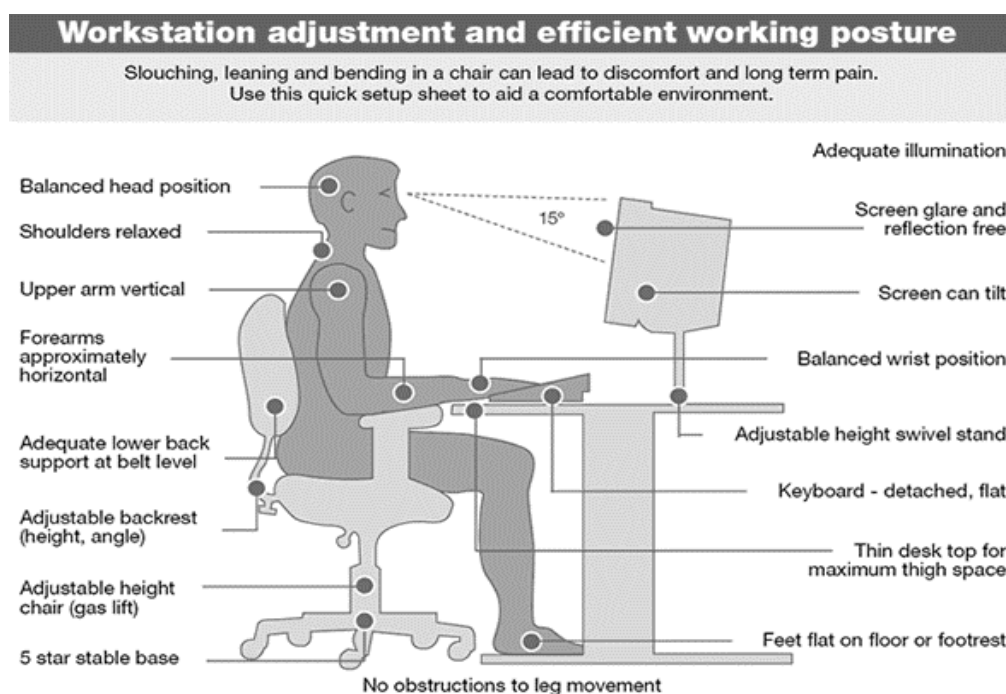


Figure 1. Image showing ideal workstation adjustment and efficient working posture.

Display Screens

The screen you are using should have clear and readable characters, and the text size should be comfortable to read. Images should be stable (free of flicker and jitter) and the specification of the screen should be appropriate for the intended use. Software settings may need to be adjusted to improve the above issues.

As mentioned in section 1.0 above, the screen should be free from any glare and reflection, which can be done by moving the workstation or through the use of window coverings.

Keyboards

Ideally the keyboard should be separate from the screen, however this won't always be possible where there is a need for a portable laptop. It is important to find a comfortable keying position (such as by

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pushing the display screen further back, or the use of a wrist rest), and ensure that the characters on the keyboard are clear and readable.

Mouse

The mouse should be suitable for the task(s) it is being used for, and there should be support for your wrist and/or forearm. Support can be gained from the workstation surface of the arm of a chair, however if these are not comfortable a separate supporting device could be used.

Furniture

The work surface needs to be large enough for all necessary equipment, papers, notebooks and anything else required to carry out regular tasks. You should be able to comfortably reach for all items that you need to use throughout your working day.

The surface of your workstation should be free from glare and reflection, or window coverings used when appropriate to ensure this.

Your chair should be suitable, supportive, stable and (where possible) adjustable to promote a positive working posture such as that indicated in Figure 1.

Forearms should be horizontal and eyes at roughly the same height as the top of your main display screen. Feet should be flat on the floor, without too much pressure from the seat on the back of your legs. If there is noticeable pressure, or your feet cannot sit flat on the floor, a footrest may be required.

4.0 Risk Assessment

All employees working from home should fill out *H&S-EUF25 – Working from Home Risk Assessment* to ensure the suitability of their working environment, and to determine any areas that may need investigation or further discussion to ensure a comfortable working environment.

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