

We are here to help you.

Covid-19: Posture



How's your posture doing?

For many of us, the last few weeks have brought about a new challenge as we've started to come to terms with our new way of working – the 'new temporary norm'. As we move forward, it's good practice to continue to check that we're sitting comfortably and looking after ourselves, otherwise we might find our makeshift offices are a literal pain in the neck!

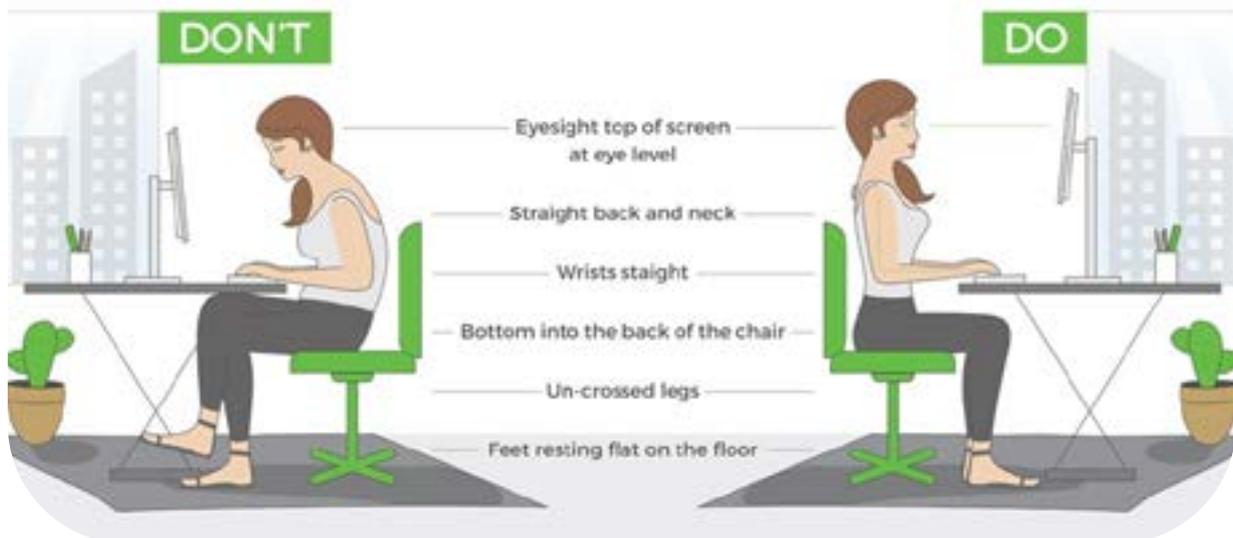
So, take some time to be extra mindful of your posture and routine so you can combat any issues that may be lurking! This article has been written in collaboration with Health & Safety and one of our Rehabilitation Consultant colleagues in Zurich Corporate Risk to help provide useful guidance and signpost support.

Why does good posture matter?

- **It's good for your health** – good posture will reduce the chances of you developing things like backache, shoulder or neck pain.
- **You'll breathe better** – when you slump or slouch, you constrict your airways and that impacts your breathing.
- **You'll digest your food better** – pressure on the organs can impact digestion and cause other health issues.
- **You'll improve your overall wellbeing**

UPRIGHT POSTURE IS WITHIN REACH

How to set up your work space



Top tips to help your posture when sitting

- Be mindful of how you are sitting – try and aim for your knees to be slightly lower than your hips as shown in the image above – if not, grab a cushion to sit on and see if that helps.
- Put your feet up if you need to – supporting your feet on an elevated surface can feel very comfortable for some people.
- Place your screen at eye level and try and keep your monitor at about arm's length away, with the top of the screen roughly in line with your eyes. If you've not got a stand, you can get creative with props or books to elevate your screen to ensure you're still working safely. Just be mindful if your screen is too high or too low, you'll have to bend your neck, which isn't going to be comfortable.
- Sunshine and light in your room? The light will make you feel better, but be careful to keep your screen as glare and reflection free as possible. Adjusting the screen brightness or contrast might help with this too!
- Keep your mouse and other things you need close to you to avoid any unnecessary strains with overstretching.
- Have you noticed back, neck or shoulder pain? Change your position often – this is crucial because sitting in the same position all day could lead to issues. Many people tell us chopping and changing where they work intermittently when needed throughout the day helps. So, if it's sat at your table to start with, then moving to a kitchen worktop to getting in the garden (if you have one) - do what works for you.
- Add a rolled towel for lumbar support – if you're someone who struggles with lower back pain, lumbar support pillows often help – but if you haven't got one, a towel can be just as effective.
- Place a pillow under your seat – it can go a long way to making an ordinary chair a lot more comfortable!
- Try and keep your hands, wrists and forearms horizontally when typing with your keyboard in front of you. Some people like to use a wrist rest to keep their wrists straight and at the same level as the keys. If you haven't got one of these at home, talk to your manager about ordering one. You can order them through Amazon.
- If you wear bifocals, you may find they aren't easy to get on with when it comes to computer work, as it's important to be able to see the screen without having to raise or lower your head. You may need to adjust your screen so it works for you.
- Avoid prolonged calls with your phone balanced on your shoulder – use handsfree, or if you have one, a headset. But the best option is to use technology provided by your employer, such as Skype or Microsoft Teams.
- Take regular breaks - our bodies aren't meant to be sat in the same position for too long. Whether it's to make a cuppa or just taking a stretch, make sure you get up as often as is practicable. Frequent short breaks are better for you than fewer long ones. Some people tell us setting an alarm on their phones gives them the discipline to do it.

Reference sources and support

Here's a few useful things you can do and some support resources:

Tackling neck or back pain...

<https://www.versusarthritis.org/media/3092/neck-pain-exercise-sheet.pdf>

https://www.csp.org.uk/system/files/7_back_pain.pdf

Why not check out desk yoga...

https://oxygen.eu.crossknowledge.com/candidat/product_sheet.php?trainingcontent_id=139306

<https://www.bupa.co.uk/newsroom/ourviews/chair-yoga>

Or try out some desk exercises...

<https://www.posturite.co.uk/media/pdf-downloads/Workstation-Exercises.pdf>

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