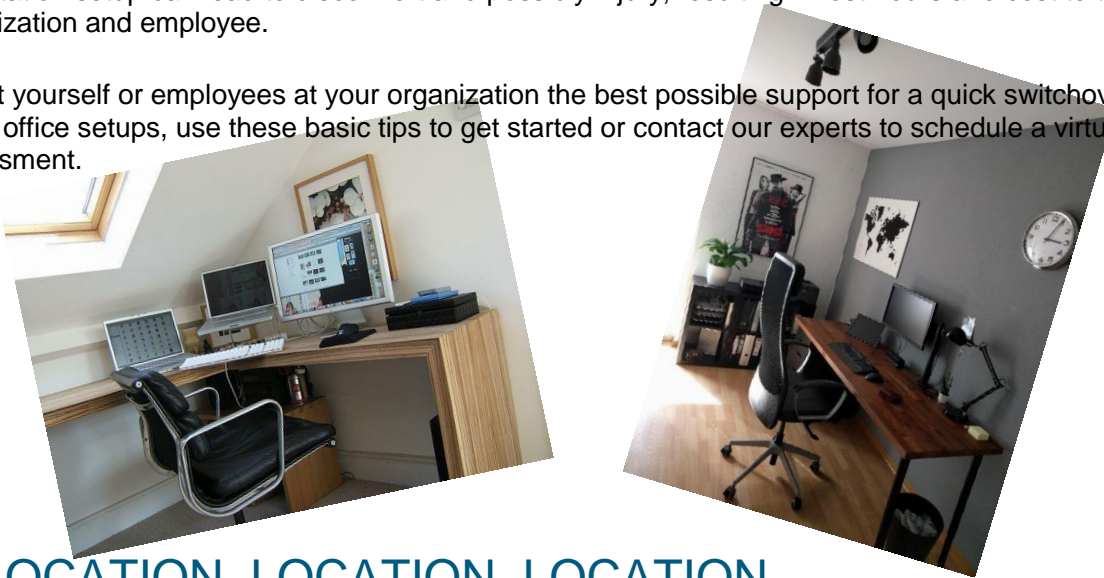


## MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE: HOME OFFICE ERGONOMIC TIPS AND IDEAS

According to a recently published article by Forbes, 43% of employees in the U.S. work remotely at least a portion of their time. Much of the younger generational workforce expect this as an option in a corporation and would even take a pay cut for this benefit. Only a third of businesses say they are prepared for this change in mindset and working culture and many still resist it.

This could change with recent developments of COVID-19; many organizations are allowing employees to voluntarily work from home and are considering whether to require them to work from home. With a sudden change in working habits and location, many employees aren't aware of the basic ergonomic principles of setting up a workstation and the impact it can have. Improper workstation setup can lead to discomfort and possibly injury, resulting in lost hours and cost to the organization and employee.

To get yourself or employees at your organization the best possible support for a quick switchover to home office setups, use these basic tips to get started or contact our experts to schedule a virtual assessment.



### 1. LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Where you set up your home office space matters. Don't be slouching on the couch or leaning over an uncomfortable workspace. If you have a window in your space, avoid directly facing it where you'll get glare, sit perpendicular to it, or close the blinds. If you're working in a basement, consider using task lighting angled behind your screen to avoid a stark difference. You don't want too much light or glare, or not enough light.

Designate a specific place for work to help you maintain a work/life balance. If possible, a room with a door so you can leave your work behind at the end of the day.

One of the most important steps in selecting the right location is to find the right surface height to sit at when performing much of your work. Your elbows should be at a 90-degree angle with shoulders relaxed. Kitchen tables are typically higher than you want, which could hurt your shoulders or neck. If your forearms are elevated, it could cause circulation issues or numbness. The best solution, of course, is a desk that is adjusted to the correct height for you, or even a card table which tends to sit a little lower. If you can't secure a desk, there are other options or tricks to consider in the next section.

## 2. EQUIPMENT

When possible, use a chair with adjustable height. If your chair is too low, try sitting on a cushion to get to the correct height. A rolled-up towel or small blanket can provide lower back (lumbar) support as well. Instead of your regular dining room chair, the best solution is to get an office chair with adjustable height, tilt, and backrest.

Your monitor (or laptop screen) height should be set up so that your line of sight is within the top third of the screen. If your screen is too low and you don't have access to a monitor stand, use books or a ream of paper to elevate the screen.

If you can procure an external keyboard and mouse, that works best for flexibility and space to spread out your shoulders and avoid having your forearms angled inward to access a small laptop keyboard. When using a laptop, you will need external equipment to elevate the screen such as a laptop riser. If you do not have a riser or do not have funds to purchase one, you can use books, reams of paper, shoeboxes, etc. to raise up laptop height. An external keyboard and mouse should sit below your laptop or in front of your desktop screen.



## 3. LAPTOP TIPS

Many employees who don't regularly work from home will be using a laptop instead of a desktop computer. This poses its own specific ergonomic considerations such as getting additional equipment such as a laptop riser and an external keyboard and mouse. Even though it is named a laptop, the general rule is not to put your laptop directly on your lap while working. It gives off heat and the position it forces your body to be in will not be comfortable or ergonomically correct.

There is a variety of equipment available for the best possible travel and at-home setups with laptops that won't break the bank.

## 4. A SIMPLE ERGONOMIC OFFICE CHECKLIST

- Feet flat on the floor
- Knees at about a 90-degree angle
- Hips at about a 90-degree angle

- Elbows at about a 90-degree angle when typing and using a mouse
- Wrists straight when typing and using a mouse
- Monitor raised so that your line of sight is in the top 1/3 of the monitor
- Take breaks to stretch every 30 minutes
- Give your eyes a break from the screen

## 5. GET CREATIVE WITH PROPS FROM YOUR HOME

There is a variety of things available in most people's homes that can be used for raising up a computer screen height, used as a foot rest or used to pad up or raise seat height in a chair:

- Books/Binders/Reams of Paper
- Chair or Couch Cushions
- Bed Pillows or Throw Pillows
- Cardboard Boxes/ Plastic Storage Bins
- Partially Stuffed Duffel Bags
- Shoe Racks/Shelves



## 6. AN ERGONOMICS EXPERT EXPLAINS HOW TO SET UP YOUR HOME OFFICE DESK

Watch a short video here to see some home office suggestions and fixes!

[https://youtu.be/F8\\_ME4VwTiw](https://youtu.be/F8_ME4VwTiw)