

Home Office

To understand the best way to set up a workstation at home, it is helpful to understand the concept of neutral body positioning. This is a comfortable working posture in which your joints are naturally aligned. Working with the body in a neutral position reduces stress and strain on the muscles, tendons, and skeletal system. The following home set up tips are important considerations when attempting to maintain neutral body postures while working at home. Guidance pictures for neutral positioning can be found at the end of this document.

CHAIR	<p>You should have a chair at home that is stable, adjustable in height, allows freedom of movement and provides lower back support.</p> <p>Correct neutral positioning: Thighs and hips are supported and generally parallel to the floor.</p>
TABLE	<p>Any hard surface table will work – kitchen, dining tables, garden table; however try avoid low coffee tables and be careful with ironing boards – not a solution for a sit-stand desk-can be unsteady!</p> <p>Correct neutral positioning: Hands, wrists, and forearms are straight, in-line and roughly parallel to the floor, resting either on table or arm rests on chair.</p>
FOOTSTOOL	<p>While sitting at your table at home, can your feet be placed flat on the ground comfortably? If not place a footstool or a box to move your legs up to a more comfortable position. You will notice that you are now sitting into your chair more comfortably!</p> <p>Correct neutral positioning: Knees are about the same height as the hips with the feet slightly forward</p>
SCREEN	<p>The screen you are using may be quite low compared to your office screen. If so, place a few books / box underneath to increase the height, ensuring that your eye level is at the top of the screen.</p> <p>If using a laptop, you can do the same as above if you have accessories – make sure you have a separate keyboard and mouse.</p> <p>If you have a book stand in the house, put the laptop keyboard on it. Open the laptop as wide as it allows. The screen should now be facing you at a sufficient height. You will need a separate keyboard and mouse to work with as you will not be able to use the laptop keyboard at this angle.</p>
KEYBOARD & MOUSE	<p>Similar to your set up in the office, ensure that you have enough room between edge of table and keyboard/mouse to place your arms on the desk while typing. Otherwise use the arm rests on the chair to rest arms while typing and using mouse.</p>
DOCUMENTS	<p>Do you have to read / refer to / copy from documents placed flat on desk? Try to find something in the house that you can stand the documents against. This will reduce raising your head up and down to read.</p>
LIGHTING	<p>Do you have enough light at your work area? Avoid shadows or glares on the screen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid working under direct glare of lights and natural light behind you • Natural light in front of you or next to you is better to avoid glare

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lamp shades work well as do floor lamps
CABLING	<p>Ensure all the cables attached to lighting and computers are in good condition; not frayed or wires exposed. Stop using if so.</p> <p>The area around your work area should be clear of trailing cables and anything else that can cause slips, trips or falls.</p>
FIRE SAFETY	<p>Is there a working smoke alarm in the place you are working at? If yes, advise to test weekly. If no, advise to install one. If renting, your landlord is obliged to install one.</p> <p>Ensure your access and egress points are kept clear in case you need to leave in the event of an emergency.</p> <p>Have you an escape plan in place in the event of a fire? Click here for tips on reducing risk of fire and developing an escape plan.</p>
SUPPORT	<p>The Health & Safety Office is available for any support you need in setting up your home workstation. Complete the emote Work Self-Assessment here.</p> <p>The Health and Safety Office will be in touch after you complete your assessment and if you have any further queries please contact safety@rcsi.ie</p>

Good Working Positions

These four reference postures are examples of body posture changes that all provide neutral positioning for the body.

Upright Sitting

Upright sitting posture. The user's torso and neck are approximately vertical and in-line, the thighs are approximately horizontal, and the lower legs are vertical.

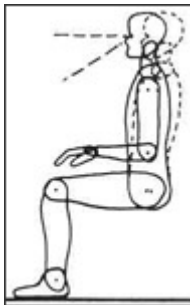
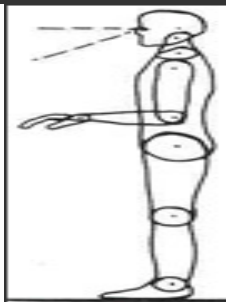


Figure 1. Upright sitting posture



Figure 2. The user's torso and neck are approximately vertical and in-line, the thighs are approximately horizontal, and the lower legs are vertical.

Standing



Standing posture. The user's legs, torso, neck, and head are approximately in-line and vertical with feet slightly apart. The user may also elevate one foot on a rest while in this position.

Figure 3. Standing posture

Declined Sitting

Declined sitting posture. The user's thighs are inclined with the buttocks higher than the knee and the angle between the thighs and the torso is greater than 90 degrees. The torso is vertical or slightly reclined and the legs are vertical. This position should not inhibit the ability to easily reach the keyboard or view the monitor.

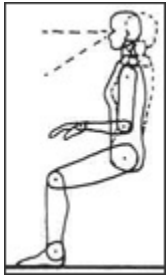


Figure 5. Declined sitting position



Figure 6. The user's thighs are inclined with the buttocks higher than the knee and the angle between the thighs and the torso is greater than 90 degrees. The torso is vertical or slightly reclined and the legs are vertical.

Reclined Sitting

Reclined sitting posture. The user's torso and neck are straight and recline between 105 and 120 degrees from the thighs.

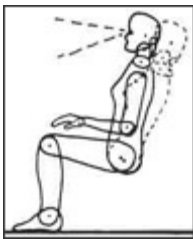


Figure 7. Reclined sitting posture



Figure 8. The user's torso and neck are straight and recline between 105 and 120 degrees from the thighs.

Stay Healthy While Working From Home

Here are some tips to help us stay healthy while working from home.

1. Getup & Move

Sitting for long periods is not good for us. So it's a good idea to get up once in a while to stretch and move your body.

- Advise to do this every 30 minutes for a minimum of 60 seconds. You could also stop your work every hour, get up and move for 10-minutes. This can make all the difference
- Find apps, such as **Stand Up! Take a break** that will remind you to take regular breaks or set an alert on your phone
- Use a portion of your lunch break to take a 20-minute walk around your neighbourhood.
- Check out these [deskercise moves](#) also to incorporate into your working day at your desk.

As a remote worker, you have extra time in your day that you don't have to waste commuting into an office. Use that time to exercise and move!

2. Leave the House

You might find that when you work from home you never leave your house! If you do this for a long time it can have a negative effect on your mental health. Make a point of leaving your house during the working day. Some tips below and some of which require COVID-19 restrictions being lifted.

- Grab a mid-morning coffee in your local coffee shop
- If you have fellow remote working colleagues or friends working nearby, meet for mid-morning coffee once a week
- Work in your local coffee shop or library that has good Wi-Fi
- Go for that walk at lunchtime.

Everyone needs to socialise, and as a remote worker, you may find yourself needing it more than when you were in an office.

3. Skip the Bold Food!

When you're home alone, no one is there to judge you for eating biscuits for breakfast!! A full fridge can be a disaster for people with little willpower. Here are some tips for eating healthy while working remotely:

- Plan and put together your snacks and lunch (like you would if going into 'the office')
- Keep fruits and nuts etc. close by to grab instead of biscuits and sweets
- Stick to your break/eating times as you would while working in 'the office'.

4. Stick to a Schedule

If you have flexible hours you may be inclined to hit that snooze button a few times more than normal while working remotely! To ensure you are prepared and feel better throughout the day its best to keep to a schedule. Design out a working hour's schedule that suits you and stick to it.

5. Set up a Healthy Work Area

Take a look at your working space at home. Is the room dark, area cluttered, too warm? This environment may be making you drowsy and sleepy.

- Open curtain / raise blinds to let in natural light
- Open window to let in some fresh air
- Have a clean desk policy
- Add some house plants. House plants provide cleaner air and boosts your mood.

6. Get Showered & Dressed

When working from home you can wear whatever you want. It may be enticing to stay in pj's all day; however this can have negative effects to you mental health and wellbeing. Wearing these type of clothes all day can impede productivity, you're likely to make poorer food choices or forget to get up and move around. Getting showered and dressed for the day make you want to get up and move and be productive. So instead of staying in pj's why not wear your workout clothes - this may entice you to do that lunchtime walk!