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SAFETY ALERT

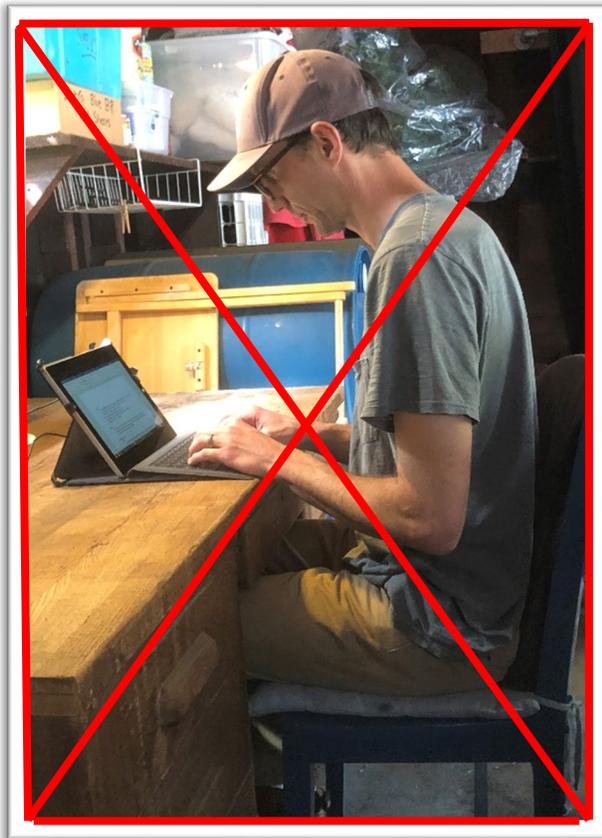
No. 20-01

HOME OFFICE ERGONOMICS

Rev. December 2021

With the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic, many aspects of our lives remain changed, especially the way we work. Many have settled into working from home and have used these guidelines to ensure a safe remote working environment. This Safety Alert will guide you in setting up a workstation at home and implementing good work habits to minimize the physical stress on your body. All employees and their supervisors must adhere to the ergonomics and workplace safety guidance provided in this Safety Alert and in the [Ergonomics: Working from Home](#) video.

Let's start by looking at some common ergonomic problems in the photo below.



Notice some of the problems demonstrated in the photo to the left.

Problem #1: The neck is bent forward to look at the monitor.

- Solution - Raise the monitor height to near eye level to keep the neck upright.

Problem #2: The shoulders are collapsing forward.

- Solution - Sit back in the chair and maintain the natural curve of the spine

Problem #3: Forearms should be parallel to the floor.

- Solution - Use an external keyboard and reposition arms

Problem #4: Pressure (contact stress) on the palms.

- Solution - Raise the hands when typing. Rest palms in lap when pausing.

Standard Ergonomic Guidelines:

Chair:

- Use a comfortable chair that allows your feet to rest directly on the floor. If using a hard chair, use a cushion and/or neatly folded blanket to sit on and for your back rest.
- If your chair does not permit your feet to rest firmly on the floor, try using something around the house as a footrest. (e.g., stable box, sturdy books, shoe box, a ream of paper)
- Sit with your hips all the way back to the backrest to support your lower back.
- Sit upright, maintaining the natural curve of your spine.
- Keep your elbows at your side. This will help you relax your shoulders.
- Do not lean forward on your elbows.

Monitor:

- The top of your monitor should be at or near eye level. If you are working from a laptop, consider using an external keyboard that can be plugged in with a USB cable if available. Then, find a stable object, such as a box, that can support your laptop at a raised level.

Keyboard and mouse:

- Position the keyboard and mouse on the same level surface that allows your forearms to be parallel to the floor (e.g., desktop, keyboard tray, a partially open desk drawer)
- If working on a desktop that is too high to keep your forearms parallel to the floor, keep the keyboard and mouse right at the edge of the desktop. This allows you to sit back in your chair and avoid uncomfortable contact stress by resting your wrists on the desktop.
- Take frequent, short breaks from typing or computer work to let your wrists and shoulders rest.
- Try new positions for your equipment often and learn if each position creates relief or discomfort.
- Positioning the keyboard directly on your lap may provide relief or avoid discomfort in your wrists.



Notice how the position of the keyboard in the three photos affects the angle of the forearms relative to the floor. Forearms are best positioned parallel to the floor.

Posture:

- Don't slouch, but keep your shoulders relaxed.
- Keep your elbows close to your body (this is critical to comfort).

Breaks:

- Take at least a five-minute break away from your screen every half hour to hour.
- Take 1 to 2 minute breaks every 15 to 20 minutes, which should be used for some quick stretching.

Eye care:

- Enlarge (i.e., zoom) your font.
 - Imagine you are reading a book. The words should be large enough and close enough to your eyes so that you are comfortable.
- Every 20 minutes take 20 seconds to look away from your screen and at something 20 feet away from you. (20-20-20 rule)
- Position monitor perpendicular to a light source like a window to reduce glare. Avoid positioning your monitor in front of or behind the light source.

Phone usage:

- Use the speaker phone or headphones to make calls and avoid neck strain. Don't hold the phone between your ear and shoulder.
- When video conferencing, use the audio on your computer instead of your phone. This removes the temptation to pick up your phone which can lead to awkward positions.

Other tips and reminders:

- Give yourself time to adjust to your new work set-up.
- Be creative with your set up. Use items around your house, such as books, to raise monitors.
- Adjust your equipment to serve your task (e.g., mouse use versus keyboard use).



Notice how the keyboard and mouse are positioned differently in each of the photos. On the left, the setup is for high frequency mouse use. On the right, the keyboard is positioned for high use. Adjust your equipment throughout your day, as your tasks change.

- Control and manage cords to eliminate tripping hazards in walkways and under your workstation.
- Maintain room for your feet under your workstation.
- Avoid resting wrists on hard surfaces. A soft hand towel or wash cloth can be used for a temporary wrist rest.

Ergonomic & Safe Work Policy Acknowledgement:

To ensure a safe working environment for employees working remotely, the guidelines in this Safety Alert shall be followed. In addition, a [video](#) on these guidelines including general workplace safety has been developed to further help employees with creating safe remote work environments. After reviewing this Safety Alert and the video, each employee shall record their acknowledgment of these safety requirements in the provided attachment and provide a copy to their supervisor. Schools and offices shall keep copies for their records.

Implementing the safe work practices described in this Safety Alert and in the video will significantly reduce strain, discomfort and other injuries while working at home or remotely. Our collective goal is to support schools through our work. We must dedicate ourselves to working safely to deliver on our educational mission.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Environmental Health and Safety at (213) 241-3199 or visit <https://achieve.lausd.net/oehs> for more information.

Additional Resources:

[Ergonomics: Working from Home](#), a video from Sedgwick Claims Management Services

[Ergonomic Resources from the California State Compensation Insurance Fund](#) – Provides very brief and effective videos on monitor placement, chair adjustment, stretching and more.

[Cal OSHA Office Ergonomics](#) – Provides a useful diagnostic checklist with solutions.



HOME OFFICE ERGONOMICS & GENERAL SAFETY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM



I acknowledge that I have reviewed **Safety Alert No. 20-01, *Home Office Ergonomics***, and the ***Ergonomics: Working from Home*** video provided by the Los Angeles Unified School District and the Office of Environmental Health & Safety. I acknowledge my accountability to read, view, understand and abide by all the safety rules, regulations, and requirements provided in these two resources and will discuss any safety issues directly with my supervisor.

I acknowledge that I have read the above and fully understand the policy.	
Date:	Employee #:
School or Office:	
Print Name:	
Employee Signature:	

*A copy of this signed form will be kept at the employee's school or office.