



University  
of Idaho

# ERGONOMICS AT HOME

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

# OVERVIEW

Working from home presents many unique challenges. You may not have the same equipment to work with, but you should work with what you have to maintain comfort and productivity. The same concepts that are applied at work can be applied at home, with a little imagination. In this brief presentation, we will review the following areas:

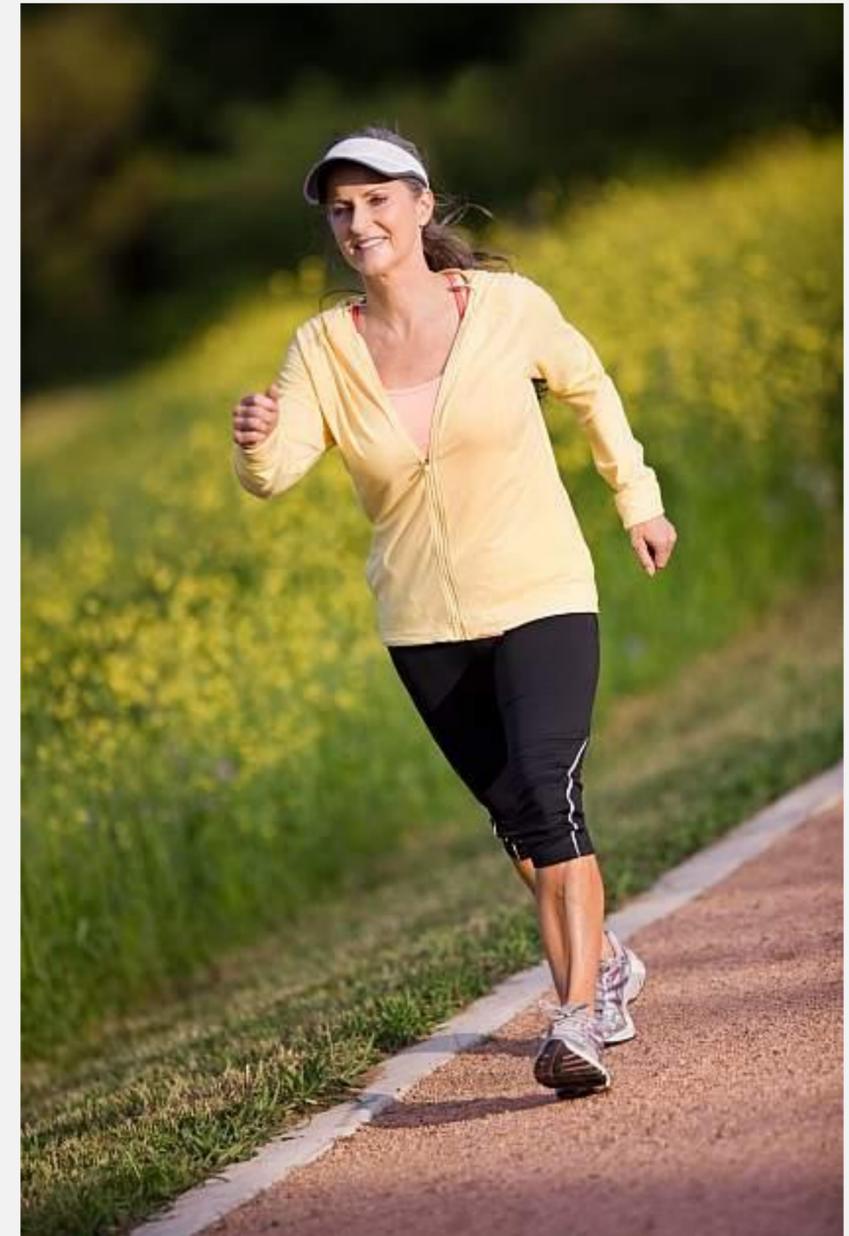
- I Healthy habits for wellness when working at home.
- I How to set up a home office for comfort and productivity.
- I Options other than sitting at a desk in order to vary your posture.



# HEALTHY WORKSPACE HABITS

Just as you would in the workplace, it is important to take breaks, stretch and refresh when working from home. Here are some general tips to stay productive and comfortable.

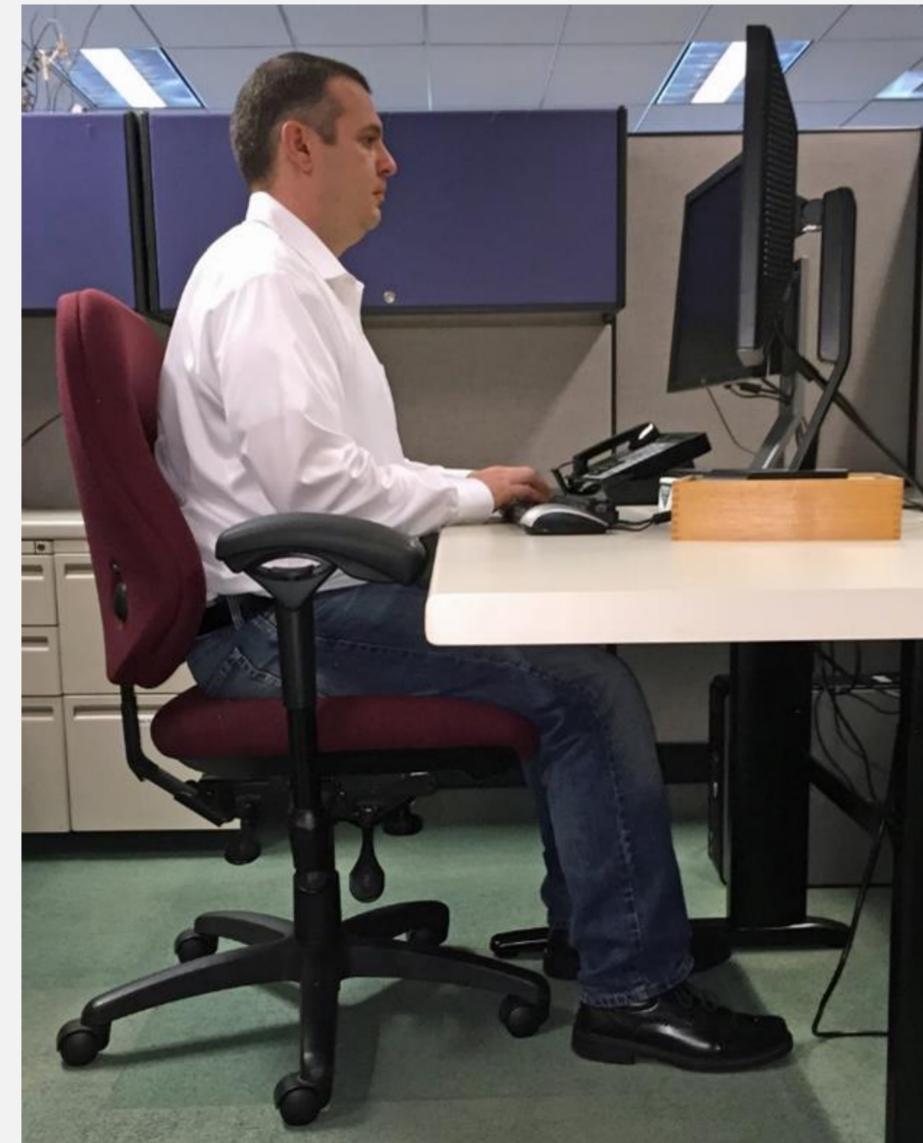
- I Find a comfortable location to work for extended periods
- I Change your position often
- I Minimize distractions
- I Take short breaks to stretch or do deep breathing
- I Go for a walk, or other activity away from your workspace, on longer breaks
- I Eat healthy snacks and stay hydrated



# ERGONOMIC PRINCIPLES

The ideal home office space would include a desk and adjustable office chair, to which you could apply standard ergonomic principles.

- I Head level
- I Shoulders relaxed
- I Wrists straight
- I Lower back supported
- I Feet supported



# ERGONOMIC PROBLEMS

If you do not have a dedicated desk and office chair to use, you may need to be creative in finding ways to apply these principles to other positions and spaces. Watch out for common pitfalls, as illustrated here.

- I Screen too low
- I Keyboard too high
- I No back support
- I Hard edges at support points (edge of table)
- I Slumped posture
- I Head tipped down



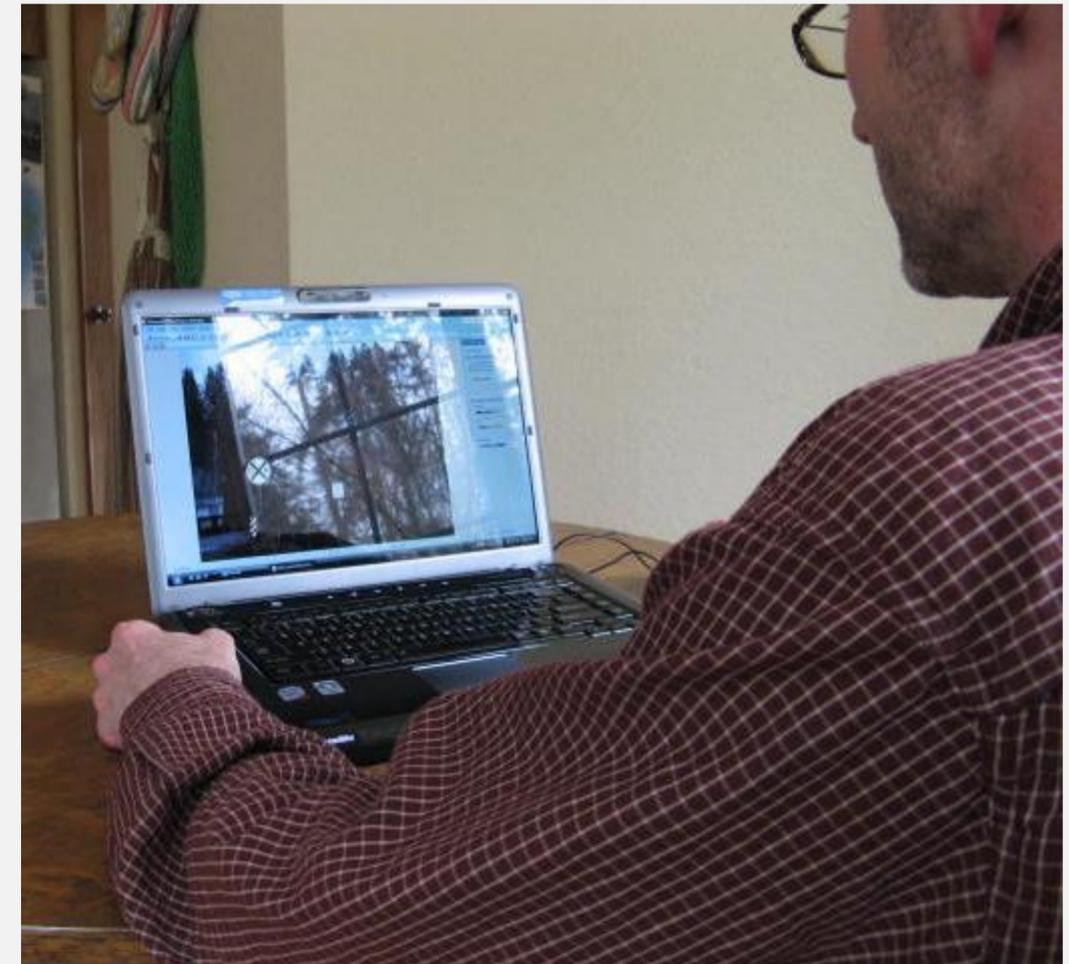
# ERGONOMICS – TIPS TO MAKE IT FIT

**I** If you are working on a laptop:

- Rest and stretch your fingers and hands
- Use a full-sized keyboard and mouse
- Attach a second monitor and find a way to adjust the height; a stable stack of books can work

**I** Ease eye strain

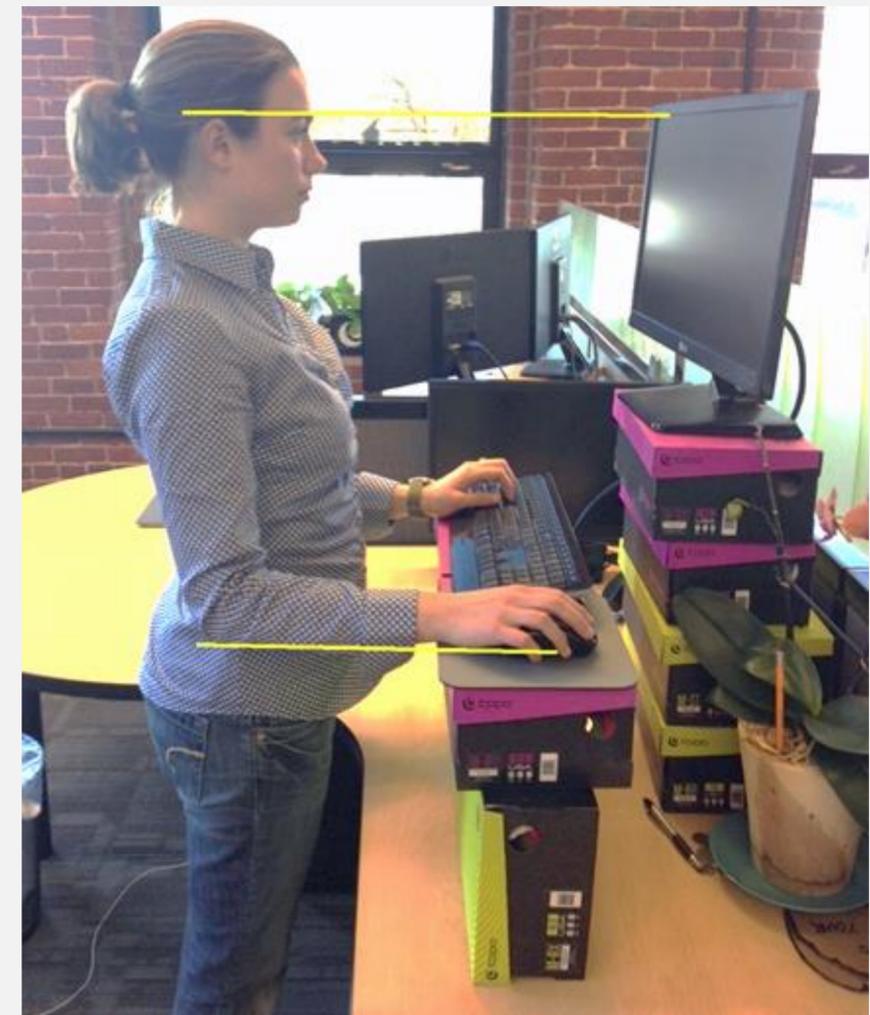
- Avoid glare from windows
- Use task lighting if needed
- Change the color or intensity of your screen



# STANDING MAY BE AN OPTION

If you don't have a standing desk at home, be creative. Find a taller work surface, or stack items (be sure they are stable!) to raise the monitor, keyboard and mouse.

You may also be able to stand for tasks that don't involve the computer, such as talking on the phone or dealing with papers.



# RECLINING CAN WORK

## BUT NOT ALL DAY

Reclining can be a nice break from sitting or standing at a table or desk. With proper support, you may be able to position the laptop to allow your wrists to be straight, and have the laptop screen closer to a proper height.

But don't get too comfortable; this position will still put strain on your back, neck and eyes.

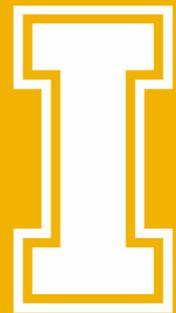


# CHANGE POSITIONS

Keeping the ergonomic principles in mind, be creative in building a space to work at home.

As much as possible, try to “mix it up.” No single position is likely to work comfortably all day. Whether you sit, stand or recline, take the time to ensure your comfort.

Stretch and move before you feel any aches or pains. If you should start to ache, take a break and look for other ways to properly support that part.



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# FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Drawn from Washington State Department of Labor & Industries  
and other U.S. government websites