

Tips for working from home healthily

Here are a few tips to help keep you in balance in this period of working from home. They'll hopefully help you to get through this period and return to work healthily.

- Vary the time you spend sitting, standing and walking. Try to change your work posture every hour (preferably every 45 minutes) to prevent your body from being taxed. If necessary, use a timer or an egg-timer.
- You can use the Wellnomics Workplace break programme (installed on every WUR computer) to remind you to take short breaks (stretch, taking a look outside, etc.) and longer breaks when you move, change your work posture or do the exercises that Wellnomics Workplace shows you.
- If you are working at a table or desk that cannot be adjusted, adjust the height of your chair to accommodate that of your table.
- Be sure you can keep your shoulder area relaxed when sitting at your desk or table by adjusting the height of your chair, perhaps with a sturdy cushion to sit on. The angle in your elbows should be at about 90 degrees.
- If you then can't sit with your feet flat on the floor, use a foot support or a sturdy box under your feet so that you have enough support from your feet as you sit.
- If you work only with a laptop, be sure not to work for more than two hours a day. This is in connection to the way your head, neck and upper back are bent forward, which is extra exertion on your body, and to working with extended arms because the laptop is further away on the table.
- It is better to use a laptop stand or a pile of books to get the laptop screen to the correct height for working/viewing. Use a separate keyboard and mouse.
- If you have a monitor, you could attach the laptop to the monitor so that you have a larger screen and you could use the laptop's keyboard and a separate mouse.
- Move during your lunch break. For example, take a walk in the fresh air. Try not to immediately go onto your smartphone in your breaks (again, fine motor skills). Do some exercises or stretching.

- Work at times that are practical for you; for example, when the children are asleep or playing outdoors.
- When possible, change your work posture by, for example, reading a text while standing. thinking while walking (pacing) or thinking while standing at the window and staring outside. You don't have to spend the entire day sitting!
- If you have to be on the phone a lot, use earbuds or a headset so that you don't have to hold your smartphone all the time.

The attachment contains a number of exercises to help relax your eye muscles (warm hands on your eyes) or your shoulder area and arm muscles. You can easily do these exercises in a longer Workspace break or when waiting for coffee or the kettle.

1 Chair 

- A** the edge of the seat should touch bottom of the kneecap
- B** a fist of space between knee and chair
- C** the backrest should support the lower back
- D** elbows at 90° relaxed on armrest

2 Desk 

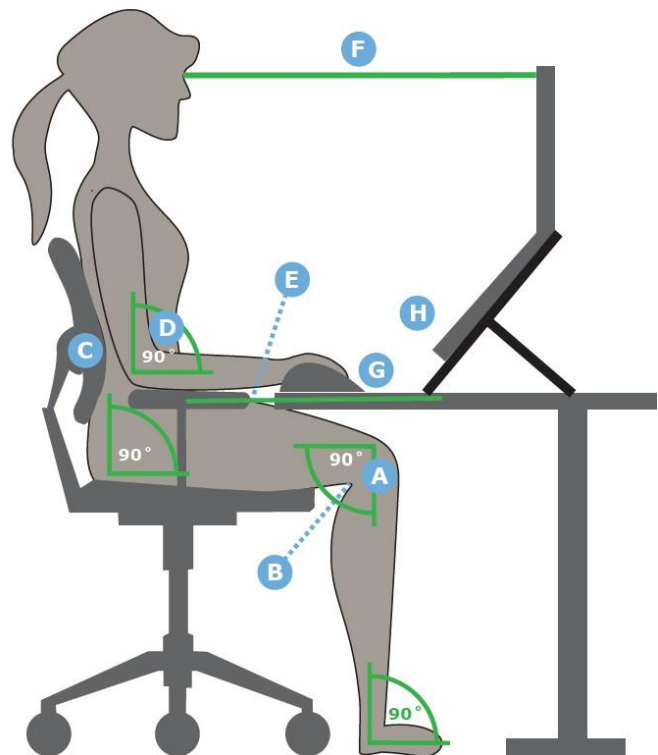
- E** Same height as armrest OR raise chair and use foot stool

3 Computer 

- F** top of screen at eye level and one arm length away
- G** keyboard 10cm from edge of desk and in front of you. The mouse next to it
- H** text goes between keyboard and screen

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Exercises to help you relax while working:

- To relax your eyes/eye muscles: Rub your hands together to warm them. Sit back in your chair with your feet flat on the floor and put your warm palms on your eyes. This shuts your eyes off from the light. Rest your fingers on your head and try to drop your shoulders as much as possible. Try to relax your jaw muscles so that your mouth drops slightly open (if at all) and your tongue rests in the bottom of your mouth. It gradually gets dark behind your hands. Then drop your arms slowly and keep your eyes shut. When you open your eyes again, you'll notice that it's difficult to focus at first but, after blinking a few times, you'll see sharply again.
- For a relaxing way to sit: Sit on your ischium/seat bones with your feet under your knees and on the floor. You can also shut your eyes. Press your right foot firmly into the floor and feel how the muscle tension rises via your leg to your pelvis and romp. Be aware of how far the tension goes and how your breathing changes. Then slowly let the muscle tension back 'glide back down': relax the muscles in your buttocks, pelvis and upper leg and let the tension flow via your foot into the ground. Feel the difference between the right and left halves of your body and then do the same exercise for your left half.
If you did this exercise well, you'll end up sitting **in** rather than on your chair with 'soft and wide' buttocks
- To relax your arm muscles and shoulder muscles: Slightly swing your arms from front to back with your thumbs pointing forward. And also gently raise your shoulders to your ears about ten times. Experience the effect on your breathing, your arm movement and the muscle tension. Gradually drop your shoulders ten times and feel how your muscles relax and your breathing move to your stomach region.

Bend your shoulders forward and roll your arms inward (turning brings the backs of the hands together in front of your stomach). Then slowly bend your shoulders backward and slightly downward, roll your arms open (out) and turn your palms out. Make this movement to the extent that it feels good and gives a slight stretch to your chest, upper arms and lower arm muscles. If you do these exercises in your desk chair, lean back against the chair's backrest.

Make a small circle with your shoulders by bending them forward, then raising them toward your ears, then slightly backward so the tension on the front lessens or disappears and then slowly reduce the tension in your shoulder muscles as they glide downward. If you exhale at the same time, you'll often relax even better!

Stretching your body in different directions is always good as long as you do it for relaxation!

Try to get up from your chair every 45 minutes and move/walk. Get something to drink, go to the WC, walk to the printer, etc.

A walk at lunch is good for general relaxation, it stimulates blood circulation throughout your body and fresh air is good for your concentration!

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