**Home Office Ergonomic Tips**

**Provided by Julie Dorsey, OTD, OTR/L, CEAS**

These are general tips when in reality, ergonomics is about fitting the workstation to the person and each individual is very different. Use these tips as a starting point and get creative to adjust your workstation to your own comfort. There are lots of household objects that can be used in makeshift workstations… some are suggested here but there are many others. Perhaps most importantly, listen to your body! If you have discomfort, do not just push through to complete the task- take a break and try to identify the source of the discomfort.

**Lighting and Vision**

* Set up your monitor 90 degrees from a window if possible… don’t face the window and don’t have it at your back… cuts down on glare. If unable, use shades or curtains.
* Lower the ambient light and use task lighting over documents (e.g. gooseneck lamps)
* 20-20-20 rule: for every 20 minutes of computer or other visually intense work, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
  + Pick something to stare at across the room… this changes your focusing distance and gives your eyes a chance to rest. Be sure to fully blink frequently.

**Chair**

* Use a comfortable chair with back support, add pillows if needed for extra support especially if chair isn’t cushioned.
* Towel rolls work well for lumbar support (hand towels, dish towels).
* Feet should rest comfortably on the floor when sitting back in the chair, use a footrest if needed (cardboard boxes, binders, textbooks work well!)

**Monitor**

* Keep monitor height level with eyes- when looking straight ahead, eyes should be level with the top of the monitor (tip: this will also help with your Zoom/webcam angles!)
  + If using a laptop, get an external keyboard and mouse and put the laptop on a platform to achieve the appropriate height (can use boxes, books)
* Monitor(s) should be about arm’s length away (measured when siting back comfortably in your chair)… if using multiple screens or a very large screen, they should be a few inches further back
* Can zoom in on text (enlarge) to compensate for desired focusing distance… can get tricky with progressive lenses so play with this

**Desk/Work surface**

* Desk height for typing/keyboard should be lower than you would think… want elbows greater than 90 degrees for blood flow and to get wrists in a more neutral position. Avoid wrist extension as this increases pressure in the carpal tunnel
  + To achieve this when all your work surfaces are high (>30” for “average” height person… around 5’6”-5’8”), can sit in a higher chair and use a footrest if needed
* In general, watch contact stress- where your elbows, wrists, forearms are resting on hard surface and/or sharp edge for long periods of time. Add padding, wrap edges of desks… soften the surfaces where possible (can use washcloths)
* Keep the mouse as close to the keyboard as possible to avoid awkward shoulder movements… keep the most frequently used items in midline for neutral positioning
* Can you work while standing sometimes? For example, if you are reading, talking on the phone, handwriting something… could you do this while standing at the kitchen counter or a high dresser to vary your working posture?

**Additional**

* Get up and move! Take breaks every 30-60 minutes… active breaks (getting up and moving) and passive breaks (such as a seated stretch, breathing exercises) are essential!
* Stay well hydrated
* Ensure a comfortable temperature in the room, use clothing layers if needed
* This is a very comprehensive website with visuals, self-assessments, etc: <http://ergo.human.cornell.edu/cuergoguide.html>