

Simple Ergonomic Strategies for Working from Home



Alliant Risk Consulting would like to provide suggested tips for Alliant clients transitioning from an office environment to telecommuting. We have offered "Simple options if you have ergonomic issues at your home office" at the end of the document. Below are general ergonomic considerations for setting-up your workstation:

Chair



Adjust the chair's back to support the inward curve of your lower back. Adjust your seat height so your thighs are parallel with the floor.

Make sure there is at least 1 inch between the edge of the seat and the back of your knees. Adjust your armrests so that your arms sit comfortably at your sides with your shoulders relaxed.

Feet and legs



- Sit with your feet flat on the floor.
- If needed, use a footrest as support if your chair is raised.
- Avoid crossing your legs.

Keyboard position



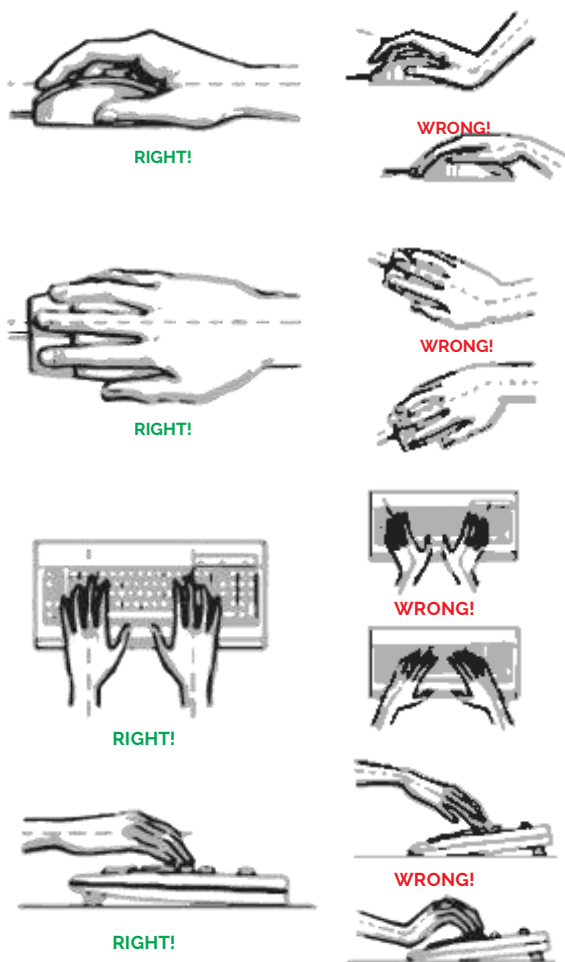
Your keyboard should be at the same height as your elbows. (May need to adjust chair height.) With shoulders relaxed, bend your elbows to comfortably reach the keyboard. Your elbows should naturally bend to form a 90° angle. Make sure your keyboard is close enough that you do not need to reach out to touch the keys. Avoid laying forearms or elbows on surfaces to reduce pressure.

Mouse



Place your mouse immediately next to the computer keyboard, and place both keyboard and mouse close to the front of the desk surface.

Wrist position

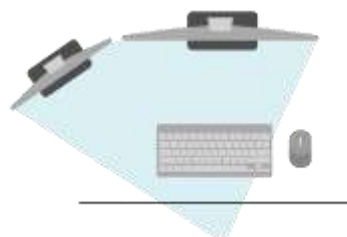


- Make sure that your wrists are straight and parallel to the floor.
- Avoid flexing your wrists upward or bending them downwards.
- Avoid rotating wrists inward and outward during keystroke entry and mouse use.

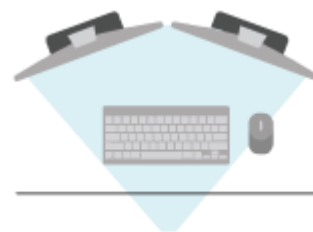
Monitors



- Position monitor height so top of monitor is slightly above eye level.
- If you have two monitors (same size) AND:
- If one is dominant (used 70% or greater), place directly behind keyboard.



- If monitors are used approximately equally, position in inverted shallow "V" to reduce neck rotation.



Phone & Frequently Used Materials

Place all frequently used materials within easy reach (generally easy reach does not require a full arm extension while sitting back in chair).

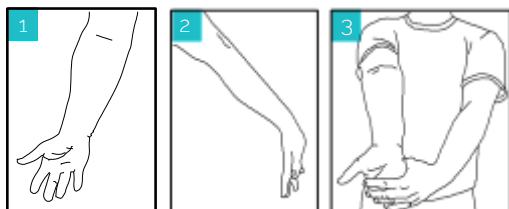
- Use a headset or speaker phone for long conversations or when entering data (so hands are free)
- Avoid cradling the phone handset by bending your neck between your shoulder and ear while talking and multitasking.

Micro/Muscle Breaks & Stretching

Note: If you have had any recent health problems, injury, or surgery, or if any of these actions cause you any pain, consult a health professional before starting this program.

- "Micro / Muscle" breaks are recommended for every 35 – 45 minutes of work and should last 2 – 3 minutes. This allows the muscles you are using to get a short rest break.
- Example stretching exercises:

Finger and Wrist Flexor Stretch



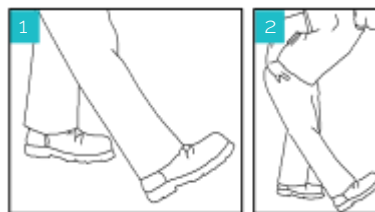
1. Straighten your elbow with palm up.
2. Point your fingers toward floor.
3. Use your other hand to gently pull down on your palm and fingers.
4. Hold for 10 - 15 seconds. You should feel a mild pulling sensation. If you experience discomfort, then perform the stretch more gently or go back to the previous step.

Finger and Wrist Extensor Stretch



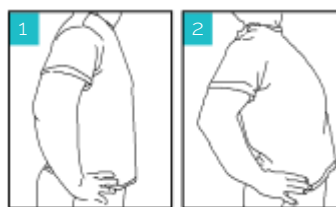
1. Straighten your elbow with palm down.
2. Bend your wrist down and make a gentle fist. If you feel discomfort in the back of your hand, then relax your fingers.
3. Gently pull down on the back of your hand.
4. Rotate your arm so that your hand is pointing away.
5. Hold for 10 - 15 seconds. You should feel a mild pulling sensation. If you experience discomfort, then perform the stretch more gently or go back to the previous step.

Hamstring Stretch



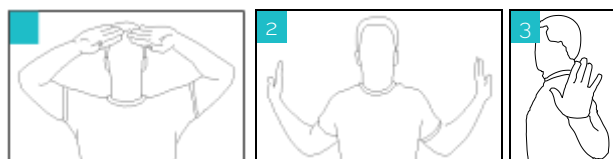
1. Place your heel on ground in front of you with knee straight. You may wish to stand next to something for balance.
2. Keep your back straight, look up at the ceiling, and bend forward at your hips.
3. Hold for 10 – 15 seconds. You should feel a mild pulling sensation. If you experience discomfort, then perform the stretch more gently or with your foot on the floor.

Low Back Flexor Stretch



1. Place your hands on your hips.
2. Gently lean back.
3. Hold for 10 - 15 seconds. You should feel a mild pulling sensation. If you experience discomfort, then perform the stretch more gently or go back to the previous step.

Neck Shoulder Stretch



1. Place hands in front of forehead with palms facing out. Take a deep breath in.
2. Pull elbows toward back pockets while rotating palms out.
3. Slowly exhale while squeezing shoulder blades together and drawing head back.
4. Once you have fully exhaled, hold for 10 - 15 seconds. Repeat for 2 repetitions. If you experience discomfort, then perform stretch more gently or go back to the previous step.

Simple options if you have ergonomic issues at a home workstation

The goal at your home office workstation is to create a workstation set-up that is as ergonomically correct as possible. If possible, always work from a standard computer set-up (i.e. chair, standard size keyboard, mouse, monitors) and avoid prolonged working from laptop or on couches or beds.

For non-routine work on computer at home, you may not have the same ergonomic equipment as your office workstation, so below are a couple general suggestions to assist with common ergonomic issues:

What if my chair does not have adjustable features?

- Sitting in a fixed chair for prolonged periods of time is uncomfortable and not recommended.
- Instead, invest in an adjustable chair with a seat height up to 22 inches, adjustable lumbar support, and well-cushioned seat.

What if my chair doesn't raise high enough so my elbows are at same height as keyboard?

- To raise you up, add enough cushions or other soft materials (ex, towels) on the seat of the chair until elbows are closer to keyboard height. (This is a short-term solution.)

What do I do if my feet do not touch the ground?

- Support your feet by using a phone book, step stool, box, etc., if they don't firmly touch the ground while sitting.
- Request a footrest from your manager.

How do I adjust the keyboard and mouse if I'm using a laptop?

- Use a laptop docking station (so a standard size keyboard and mouse can be used).
- If possible, a wireless keyboard and mouse option is best to allow flexible placement.

I do not have a keyboard and mouse wrist rest, what can I do?

- Use a soft towel and roll-up so it is approximately the same thickness and the keyboard.
- Place in front of keyboard and mouse.
- Request a soft (gel or foam) wrist rest from your manager.

My laptop monitor does not raise high enough to maintain a neutral head posture, and the top of the monitor is positioned slightly above eye level. What are my options?

Use books, boxes, etc. to raise the laptop monitor high enough so top of monitor(s) is slightly above eye level. Be sure that material used is wide and sturdy enough to support monitor.