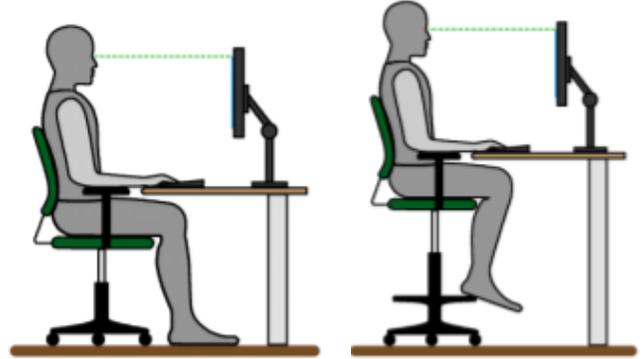# Working from Home Office Ergonomics

A productive home office is one that is comfortable, healthy and safe. A little ingenuity can go a long way to improving your set up. Your equipment and furniture should allow you to work in the following position as discussed in more detail on the office ergo POD page:

- Feet flat on the ground or footrest

- Thighs parallel to the ground

- Shoulders relaxed with elbows at your sides and about 90°

- Wrists straight

- Natural curve of back supported

- Head does not tilt up or down when viewing the screen

Workstation Set-up:

- Refer to examples of home office set-ups at the end of this document

- Refer to PHSA's Online Computer Self-Assessment to better understand the fundamentals of office ergonomics

- Find a comfortable chair with back support and keep your feet supported

- Position your keyboard and mouse at or just below your elbows

- Place the top line of text on your monitor at or slightly below eye level

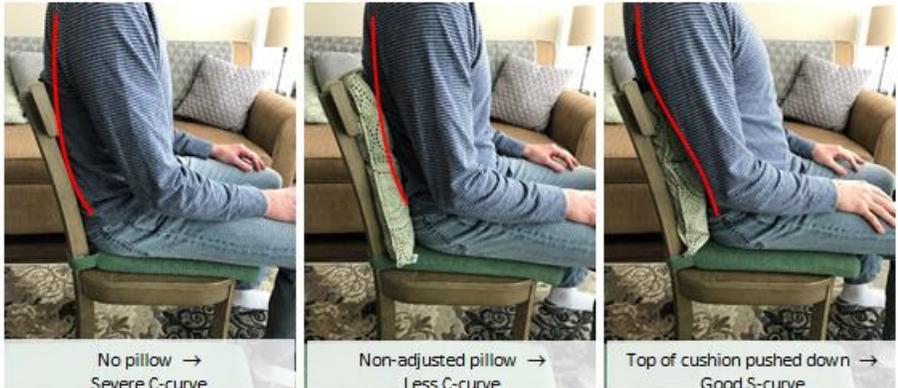- Use even lighting levels with your screen and background and avoid glare reflecting off the monitor or desk

Movement & Social Connections:

- Change your working position frequently

- Take regular breaks, fit in regular movement and some stretching throughout the day (check out make your day harder)

- Maintain a regular exercise routine

- Stay connected to your colleagues. Check-in with each other and offer support when appropriate.

- Separate work and home life by finding a designated spot for your work and establishing work and non-work hours

- Virtual, confidential counselling support services are available through the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP).

If you have reviewed this document and the Office Ergo POD page and are still having issues, contact ergo@phsa.ca for further assistance from an Ergonomist.

Home Workstation Examples

Many of us had not planned to work from home for extended periods and may not have ideal equipment. However, there are many things you can do to improve your workstation set-up. While, each of the examples below have strengths and weaknesses, consider which set-up works best for you and remember, variety is your friend. Additional tips can be found in the Laptop Ergonomics document.

Picture	Comments
	Laptop screen is used as the monitor and has been raised with a box so the top of the screen is at eye height (the correct screen height may also depend on your eyewear—check out Monitor Positioning for more details) **External keyboard and mouse** is positioned at or slightly below elbow height **Chair height** has been raised by using a cushion so that keyboard and mouse are at or slightly below your elbows **Feet are supported** by the floor in this case which allows for firm support with the knees at approximately 90 degrees
	A dual screen set up has been created by using an external monitor and the laptop screen (connected with HDMI cable) elevated to an appropriate height **A height adjustable office chair** has been raised to allow nearly neutral elbow and shoulder postures. The seat pan has been tilted down at the front to help adjust for the thick tabletop. **Foot support** is created using some books **General Tips**: If you feel that your neck is bent down, try raising your screen. If you feel that you are tilting your head back or your eyes are feeling dry, try lowering your screen. Enlarge your font to make easier to maintain a neutral working posture.
	Backrest: Try adding a pillow if you find the angle of your chair is too upright or if you feel that your chair does not provide enough back support. Experiment with its positioning for best fit.

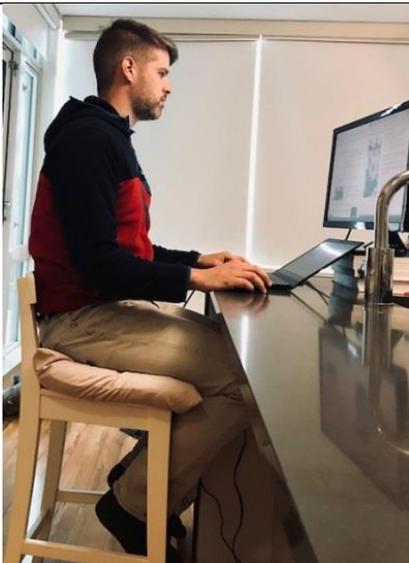|	
Before After	**Try different positions**: Sitting on the couch for short durations can make for a nice change; just try to ensure neutral postures as much as possible. Try using a pillow behind your back and a footrest to improve your positioning. **Laptop Screen:** Slightly recline the laptop screen to reduce the head tilt to view the screen. **Footrest:** Find a book, box or gardening kneeling pad to use as a footrest to support your feet and keep your knees at 90°
😊 **Drink Water** ⬆	**Try standing** and rotating working positions regularly. Remember that sustained static standing is no better than static sitting. Positional change and movement are key. **Laptop Screen** should be propped up (as in the first photo) so you can maintain a neutral neck position when reading from your screen. Using the laptop screen while using the laptop keyboard will always result in tilting the head down when looking at the screen. For this reason, the set up in the second photo is not appropriate for long duration, but would work for occasional short-duration variety. Instead, use a separate keyboard and mouse and raise your laptop monitors up on boxes or books. **Keyboard & Mouse** should be set up to just below elbow level. The counter in the first photo is perfect; in the second photo a box lid was used to adjust the height. Also, try using the mouse on the left periodically.
	Laptop keyboard can be used with an external monitor (gaining benefits of compact keyboard) **A pillow** has been used to effectively raise the chair height **Monitor** has been elevated using books **An extended desktop** is used with the external monitor as the primary screen **Note** that neither the lumbar support nor foot support in this set-up is ideal but can work for short-duration postural variety. An appropriate height box or a stack of books could also be used to improve foot support.