

PLU Workstation Ergonomics Quick Guide

Working From Home Tips

For those who are able to work from home, we are providing some additional tips for helping ensure you're as ergonomic and effective as possible.

Especially if you're using a laptop or tablet:

1. Try to use a separate keyboard and mouse, while raising your laptop or tablet screen to a comfortable eye level – either while sitting or standing – or both. If you don't have the supplies to do this, be sure to change your posture frequently while working with what you've got.
2. Keep moving – sitting with your laptop on your knees and your neck bent down while on your couch is going to cause neck and back pain. Whenever possible, move frequently between the couch, your desk, kitchen table, etc.
3. You probably don't have as many adjustments on your chairs at home as you do with your office task chair, but take advantage of things like a rolled-up towel to give you more lumbar support, use a large book or other items to elevate your tablet or laptop screen while using a separate keyboard.
4. When sitting, choose a chair that gives a bit of space between the seat and the backs of your knees. 2 or 3-fingers' width between the seat and the back of your knees is best.
5. Ensure your feet are at the correct height while sitting: use a footstool, stack of books, etc. so that your thighs are parallel with the floor and your knees and hips are at a 90-degree angle, or a bit wider.
6. With any screen-based workstation, try to place the screen so that it's not in front of a window – the bright light from outdoors causes eyestrain when you are trying to read your screen.
7. Take frequent breaks to stretch and move about --- ideally every 30 minutes or so, for at least 2-10 minutes. Scheduling breaks by using a timer can help ensure this happens.
8. Sit on a cushion or pillow – this can raise you up to a better position at your seated desk or table, and can also provide padding when you're using a less-than-ideal chair.

Calls using your home or cell phone:

1. Consider using Bluetooth headphones or earbuds. These typically have a microphone built in. Avoid holding your cellphone between your neck and shoulder when you're on conference calls and make the most out of these headsets.
2. Try to keep call times short, especially if you do not have access to earbuds or headsets with microphones.

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3. Instead of a phone call, consider having an online conversation using Google, Zoom, or other free meeting applications and use your computer's microphone, speakers, and even camera to converse with your co-workers.

General tips beyond ergonomics:

1. Try to have a separate space as much as possible. A separate office is ideal, but even if you don't, just allocate a space you can leave at the end of the day.
2. If kids are at home and you have a separate space, come up with a system to let them know when it's okay to come in. Even a simple sign on the door or on the back of your chair can help.
3. Keep yourself to a schedule, especially when it comes to the beginning and the end of the day. This is your opportunity to put in your best effort during times when you are most productive – take advantage of that!
4. Get dressed every day, do your routine. It's easy to procrastinate showers and stay in the same PJs for three days and that's a fast track to depression.
5. Try to get outside! Whether it's for a walk or just sitting on a porch. Get sunlight (if/when the sun is shining, anyway) and, more importantly, fresh air.
6. If possible, go for a walk or something before you start the day. It makes it so you don't just wake up and go to your desk and helps with prepping for the day. Also end the day by leaving the house even for 10-15 minutes, it helps you decompress after being home all day.