

# Ergonomics While Telecommuting

Let's face it, telecommuting has its challenges. If you are looking to improve your comfort while telecommuting, start with viewing the following YouTube videos, which provide some great tips to get you started. Please use caution if you attempt any stretches demonstrated in the videos. Then read the general tips below provided by Environmental Health & Safety. If you need further assistance, email [safety@brown.edu](mailto:safety@brown.edu).

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8\\_ME4VwTiw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8_ME4VwTiw)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhQgHGkDxV4>

## Select a Workstation Location

- Choose a stable, flat surface to work on (ex. desk, countertop or portable table).
- Minimize using a laptop on your lap. This creates strain on your neck.

## Seating

- Use a seat with back support. If you can, sit back in the chair while typing.
- Pay attention to your posture. If you begin to slouch forward, pull in closer to the table or desk.
- Put something under your feet if they are dangling (footrest, books, short box).

## Typing

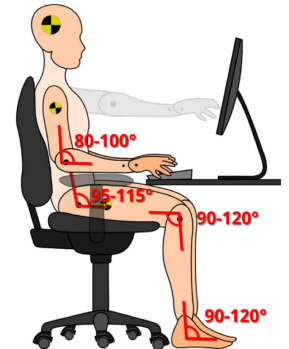
- Keep your arms, shoulders and wrists in a neutral posture. Avoid raising your arms to reach the keyboard.
- Use an external keyboard and mouse whenever possible.
- Move the keyboard further onto the desk if the edge of the desk bothers your arms or wrists.
- Drop the "feet" on the back of the keyboard if present.

## Screen/Monitor Height and Distance

- If possible, use 1 or 2 external monitors and avoid relying on the laptop screen.
- Center the primary screen directly in front of you. Second screen should be close by.
- If using 2 screens equally, center them close together.
- Adjust monitor distance approximately close to arm's length away.
- Adjust the monitor height so the top of the monitor is at or just below eye level.
- If you must use a laptop, raise it up several inches (books, a laptop stand, etc.) to bring the screen to eye level.
- If you find yourself leaning forward to see the screen(s), bring the screen(s) closer to you.

## Other tips

- Change positions once per hour to move around or stretch.
- Use keyboard shortcuts to do less typing and mousing.
- Review mouse settings (pointer speed and wheel scroll) in mouse properties.
- Use speakerphone or a headset when possible. This prevents neck strain while cradling a phone.
- If you have multifocal eyeglasses, avoid tilting your head backward to see the monitor.
  - Lower the monitor and tilt the screen upwards.



**Neutral posture (ideal angles) while seated at a workstation**



**Laptop with external keyboard and mouse**



**Centered monitors**