Remote Work Tips from OVC Human Resources

Ergonomics in your Remote Workspace

Designated Space	Create space at a desk or table that can be dedicated for computer use. Avoid sitting on a bed or couch.
Monitor	Use a separate monitor, keyboard, and mouse; if using a laptop, place this on a stand or books at eye level.
Keyboard and mouse	Connect the laptop directly to a monitor or place the laptop on a stand and use an external keyboard and mouse.
Chair	Use a chair with back support. For a kitchen or dining chair, insert a seat cushion and roll up a soft towel or blanket to place in low back area.
Phone	Use a headset, speaker phone, or microphone/voice activation. Use computer audio for conference calls.
Lighting	Position your computer at a 90-degree angle from any windows.

Source: UCSF Ergonomics Tips for Remote Work

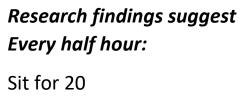Wherever your designated space is, follow these tips:
- Set your workstation to allow for neutral postures
- Keep your chin up – avoid having your chin tucked down close to your collarbone or pushed forward away from your shoulders; this can lead to neck, shoulder, and back pain
- Adjust the position of your screen and keep the center of the screen at eye level
- Rotate your job tasks to avoid constant computer work
- Remember the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, shift your eyes to look at an object at least 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds

Don't forget Stretch and Movement breaks!

Taking frequent, short rest breaks throughout the day can help you reduce tension and discomfort, restore energy, and even boost productivity.

Get up from your computer and move around, change your position, and stretch.

Computer and Desk Stretches

Research findings suggest Every half hour:

Sit for 20

Stand for 8 and move for 2

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If you have a *dedicated home office setup*, here are office ergonomics tips from [MIT EHS:](#)

Choose a **chair** that supports your spinal curves. Adjust the height of your chair so that your feet rest flat on the floor or on a footrest and your thighs are parallel to the floor. Adjust armrests so your arms gently rest on them with your shoulders relaxed.

Under the **desk**, make sure there is enough clearance for your knees, thighs, and feet. If the desk is too low and cannot be adjusted, place sturdy boards or blocks under the desk legs. If the desk is too high and cannot be adjusted, raise your chair. If your desk has a hard edge, pad the edge or use a wrist rest.

Use a **footrest** if your chair is too high for you to rest your feet flat on the floor or the height of your desk requires you to raise the height of your chair. If a footrest is not available, try using a small stool or a stack of sturdy books instead.

Place your **mouse** within easy reach and on the same surface as your **keyboard**. While typing or using your mouse, keep your wrists straight, your upper arms close to your body, and your hands at or slightly below the level of your elbows. Use keyboard shortcuts to reduce extended mouse use. If possible, adjust the sensitivity of the mouse so you can use a light touch to operate it.

Place the **monitor** directly in front of you, about an arm's length away (between 18 and 30 inches). The top of the screen should be at or slightly below eye level. This allows the eyes to gravitate naturally toward the center of the screen. The monitor should be directly behind your keyboard. Place your monitor so that the brightest light source is to the side. Use a document holder placed adjacent to and in the same plane as the computer screen.

Keep **key objects** such as your phone, stapler or printed materials close to your body to minimize reaching. Stand up to reach anything that cannot be comfortably reached while sitting. If you frequently talk on the phone and type or write at the same time, place your phone on speaker or use a headset rather than cradling the phone between your head and neck.

Additional Reads

To assess the safety of your home office: [Safety Checklist](#) (Telework.gov)

To keep your smart phone from becoming a pain in the neck: [Best Practices](#) (Sandford EHS)

For more on being a heavy computer user, here are [Ten Tips](#)(Univ. Michigan)

US Department of Labor recommendations when it comes to: [Good Working Positions,](#) [Workstation Components,](#) [Workstation Environment](#)

Need more stretches? Try [General Workstation Stretches](#) (Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety) [Office Stretches](#) (Mayo Clinic)

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Slowly but surely adjusting to working from home? **LinkedIn** has released a learning path with 16 online courses from remote work experts that may help:

Maximize Efficiency and Productivity of Remote Work

1. [Working Remotely](#) – 1 hr

2. [Time Management: Working from Home](#) – 1 hr 25 min

3. [Productivity Tips: Finding Your Productive Mindset](#) – 59 min

4. [Executive Presence on Video Conference Calls](#) – 34 min

Manage the Impact of Adjusting to Your New Work Environment

1. [Thriving @ Work: the Connection between Well-being and Productivity](#) – 41 min

2. [Managing Stress for Positive Change](#) – 57 min

3. [Building Resilience](#) – 34 min

4. [Developing Resourcefulness](#) – 18 min

Remotely Manage and Lead Teams

1. [Leading at a Distance](#) – 36 min

2. [Managing Virtual Teams](#) – 56 min

3. [Leading Virtual Meetings](#) – 32 min

Get to Know Your Remote Work Productivity Tools

1. [Learning Zoom](#) – 45 min

2. [Learning Webex](#) – 44 min

3. [Microsoft Teams Tips & Tricks](#) – 1 hr 1 min

Remote Work Tips from OVC Human Resources

The **MIT Work-Life Center** has compiled the following resources and information to support you and your family during these challenging and uncertain times.

Caring for Children

- Backup Child Care: Screened and trained caregivers are available to care for your children during the day or evening, seven days per week

- MyLife Services: Consult confidentially with a Master's- or PhD-level counselor – by telephone, video, and message-based platforms (including text) – around how to support your children's emotional needs during a crisis

- CDC Helping Children Cope with Emergencies: Tips to help you understand and reduce the emotional impact of crisis on your children

- Best Online Educational Resources for When You're Stuck at Home - With Kids: Resources from MIT Open Learning

Caring for Adults and Seniors

- Backup Adult and Senior Care: Screened and trained caregivers are available to care for your aging loved ones during the day or evening, seven days per week, across the U.S.

- Adult and Senior Care Advising: Consult confidentially with a Master's-level Social Worker around how to support your aging loved ones during a crisis

- CDC People at Risk for Serious Illness from COVID-19: Strategies to help you prepare and support those at higher risk of getting sick, including older adults and adults with certain chronic medical conditions

Caring for Yourself

- MIT MyLife Services: Consult confidentially with a Master's- and PhD-level counselor – by telephone, video, and message-based platforms (including text) – around how to manage stress and loneliness, and remain engaged in daily life during a crisis

- MyStress Tools: An online suite of stress-management and resilience-building resources

- CDC Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19: Strategies to help you understand and reduce the emotional impact of crisis on yourself and your loved ones

Caring for Your Employees

- MIT MyLife Services: Consult confidentially with a Master's- and PhD-level counselor – by telephone, video, and message-based platforms (including text) – around how to help your individual employees and teams navigate personal and work responsibilities during a crisis

- KGA Managing Remotely: Strategies for keeping teams aligned and productive while working remotely