

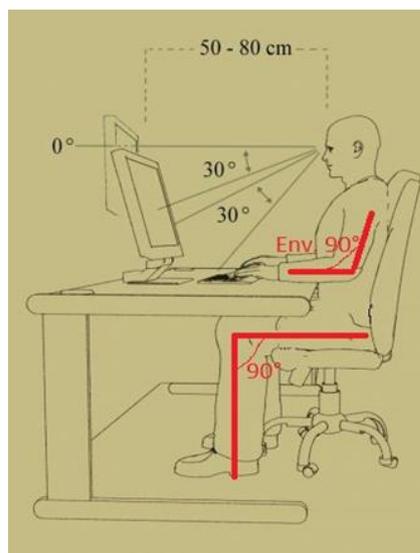
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Teleworking and Ergonomics Tips for workstation design

When we work at home with our professional computer, often a laptop, the ergonomic conditions are not always respected and we can easily feel pain. Stress is also a factor that contributes to increasing these pains and currently, in times of Covid-19 epidemics, it plays an important role.

Hereafter you will find some tips about how best to set up your home workstation. Please note that the various supports proposed can be either do-it-yourself or purchased if you have the opportunity to do so.

- **Work on a suitable support.** Do not work on a sofa or bed, the seating part is often too long and requires to add cushions for support. Correct posture is complicated and pain can occur quickly.
- **Adjust your position to have the table at elbow height.** The posture to be obtained should be as close as possible to the figure below, with the feet firmly on the ground, forearms on the table and shoulders relaxed.



By your side

If your table and seat at home are not adjustable, consider the following hints:

- If the table is higher than your elbows and your seat is adjustable: raise your seat until your elbow is at table height (the elbow should be at a 90° angle) and add a support under the feet (e.g. a toolbox, as shown in the picture). 
- If the table is higher than your elbows and your seat cannot be adjusted: place one (or several) cushion(s) to raise you to the right height (or as close as possible to the right height). Pay attention to stability.
- If the table is lower than the elbows and your seat cannot be adjusted: place a support underneath the keyboard to raise it.
- **Position your screen sideways to the window.** Working facing or backing away from the window increases the risk of glare or reflections on the screen.
- **Adjust your sitting position.** If you don't have a chair made for screen work, don't hesitate to use cushions, especially in the back area, to provide lumbar support.
- **Place the main screen and keyboard in front of you**
- **Adjust the height of your screen** to reduce neck pain. If you are using a laptop, the screen is too low and this forces you to either lean forward (bad for your back) or tilt your head (bad for your neck). If you don't have a fixed screen to connect to your computer but you have a separate keyboard, place your computer on a stand so that the top of the screen is approximately at eye level. *(The photo above shows an example of a home installation: the laptop is positioned on a wooden basket (which can also be used as footrest); a cushion has been attached to the backrest to provide lumbar support (can be attached e.g. with a tensioner); a floor lamp has been added; the workstation is installed with the window on the left.* 
- **Leave free space between the legs** (except for the footrest if the table is too high) so that you can move around easily. For example, avoid placing a printer between your legs.
- **Adjust the font size** (e.g. with the shortcut ctrl + scroll wheel). Laptop screens are generally smaller and less readable than fixed screens. Do not hesitate to vary the brightness of the display; increase the brightness if you are in a very bright place, but lower it if you are in a poorly lit room or in the evening.

By your side

- **Move around often, exercise regularly.** Get up, walk, you can also take inspiration from the exercises below, taken from the SUVA brochure “Screen work”.



Exercice 1: Etirement des épaules, des bras et des mains.

Initial position

Straight back in sitting position, arms relaxed along the body.

Exercise

Raise your arms sideways in a horizontal position, then stretch your hands and elbows backwards while pushing your upper body forward. Remain still for a little while breathing normally, then release the posture.

Repeat the exercise several times.



Exercice 3: Etirement des muscles des épaules.

Initial position

Straight back in sitting position, hand flat on the nape of the neck, elbows stretched back.

Exercise

Extend your elbows back, keeping your hands flat on the back of your neck and look straight ahead. Remain still for a little while, then release the posture

Repeat the exercise 10 to 15 times.



Exercice 2: Etirement des muscles latéraux de la nuque.

Initial position

Straight back in sitting position, arms relaxed along the body, one hand placed under the edge of the seat.

Exercise

Place your fingers with slight pressure under the edge of the seat and slowly lean your head towards your shoulder in the opposite direction. Remain still for a few moments, then release the posture.

Repeat the exercise 10 to 15 times on each side.



Exercice 4: Etirement des muscles dorsaux.

Initial position

Straight back in sitting position, forearms resting on thighs.

Exercise

Bend your head, chest and arms forward, trying to touch the floor with your hands. Remain still for a few moments while breathing normally, then return to the initial posture.

Repeat the exercise several times.

Some useful links/contacts:

- The [CFST-box](#) (available in 4 languages)
- [SUVA's](#) theme sheet on the layout of your workstation, with a special tab on teleworking
- Videos showing how to set up your workstation at home:
<https://apssap.qc.ca/article/le-coronavirus-et-notre-quotidien-teletravail/>

All F4S specialists, including our ergonomists, are at your disposal to answer any question you may have thereon.