



## Home Office Ergonomics

Telecommuting is a rising trend in many industries. Through your time here at UBC you may have worked from home through phone calls and virtual interfaces. The benefits of telecommuting are numerous to both the employer and employee. There are, however, many overlooked items with regards to ergonomic principles.

The [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#) has done a great job of laying out many of the advantages and disadvantages of home office work. They also include several further suggestions in managing a home office setup.

### Overlooked Items Often Include:

- **Lack of dedicated work space**
- **Limited computer adjustability**
- **Unadjusted furniture**

These factors can increase risk of ergonomic related strain or injury and should be adjusted. Not having a dedicated workspace (meaning one area where work is done, not necessarily an office) may lead to increased risk as sometimes workers will sit on couches, armchairs, or even lay in bed while working. For long periods, this can increase strain on various musculoskeletal systems.

Work at home often occurs on a laptop which is difficult to adjust. If working from home on many days or for long periods of time, it is worthwhile to consider an external keyboard and mouse. This allows keyboard height and monitor height to be adjusted independently of each other. Finally, furniture at home should be adjusted to follow ergonomic principles. Whether working at home or in the office, the goal is to reduce as much risk as possible. Issues such as glare and reflections should be sufficiently addressed. Control over temperature, light, and sound should also be considered as these relate to the workers ability to perform work.

Online toolkits can support at home employees. UBC's [online site](#) has many ergonomic tips and guidelines. Home office safety checklists could be used to minimize risk.

A few final important things reinforce that a home office is still an office. Identifying what areas constitute the workplace allows a focus on the ergonomic issues of those areas. Any injury during work duties (ergonomic or not) should still be reported to the appropriate office personnel.

### Home Ergonomic Tips:

- Ensure the chair is adjusted to allow monitor to be top line of text at eye level; keyboard and mouse to be just below elbow height.
- Ensure [Principles of Ergonomics](#) are followed - just as in the office
- Proper follow-up regarding MSI or workplace injury at home through regular reporting practices.