

Ergonomic Suggestions while Doing Remote Work and Virtual Coursework

Since so many individuals are working in settings outside of their normal work spaces, we need to be more mindful of posture and routine so we avoid the stress and strain that might come from working in a compromised position. The below guidance offers some suggestions to help diminish and/or avoid discomfort.

1. Identify several places you can work while being remote. This can be at a table, couch, bed, and perhaps a higher surface like a counter or a height adjustable laptop cart. Rotate working in these places throughout the day to avoid staying in one position for too long. Listen to your body, if you feel achy try some movement.
2. While seated use a rolled-up bath towel to support the lumbar spine (lower back). Rest the rolled towel in the curvature of the lumbar spine, this should feel good, not uncomfortable. Always keep your back supported while in a seated posture to avoid transferring body weight to your hands, wrists, and forearms when leaning forward.
3. Sit on a folded towel or pillow to make chairs more comfortable.
4. Put your feet up. Supporting your feet on an elevated surface and doing leg stretches will increase circulation and prevent contact stress from impacting the calves and behind the knee.
5. Minimize eye strain by looking away from screens every 20 minutes for 20 seconds.
6. Avoiding any prolonged leaning on wrists, elbow, forearms, one hip, one leg while standing, etc.
7. Neck support – Read below for safer use of Laptops since they do not meet ergonomic standards.
 - Chin should be level while working whether sitting or standing.
 - Opening the laptop lid further away will allow the neck to lengthen.
 - While reading, lift your laptop on a higher surface (stack of books) so eyes are level with top of the screen.
 - Use an external keyboard and mouse if your laptop needs to be higher during everyday use.
 - Perform chin tuck exercises 8-10 x/hour to counterbalance forward slouched posture. **(See page 2)**
8. Include intentional movement to counterbalance strained postures and reduce discomfort.
 - Brief movement breaks (10-15 seconds) every 15 minutes are recommended.
 - Gain energy by doing stretches or moving through a few yoga poses while standing or sitting.
 - Work with shoulders relaxed and back. Maintain posture of head over shoulders, shoulder over your hips.
 - Take your stairs at least once every hour.
 - Keep up with your regular exercise routines.
 - Bodies crave movement of any kind. Find what feels good and just do it.
 - [Request a virtual ergonomic appointment](#) or contact Nikki at nbgegel@ilstu.edu with questions.

Additional Resources:

Seated Chin Tuck (Gentle movements should not cause pain)

1. Sit up straight on a firm surface.
2. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and down, aiming toward your back pockets. Maintain this position throughout the exercise.
3. Looking straight ahead, pull your chin backward, as if you are making a "double chin."
4. Hold for one to two seconds; then relax — do not slouch.
5. Repeat eight to 10 times.

Supine Chin Tuck

1. Lie on your back without a pillow under your neck. If this is too uncomfortable, use the thinnest pillow possible.
2. Relax your neck muscles, allowing gravity to pull your head down, bringing your ears in line with your shoulders.
3. From this position, tuck your chin backward. If needed, place two fingers on your chin to assist with this movement.
4. Stop when you feel a stretch along the muscles in the back of your neck.
5. Hold for one to two seconds; then relax.
6. Repeat eight to 10 times.

Websites and You Tube Channels:

[Yoga for Everyone](#)

[Stretches at Your Desk](#)— Mayo Clinic

[Bob and Brad Physical Therapists](#)

[Jared Beckstram Physical Therapist](#)