

**Overview:**

Ergonomics is the study of the relationship between people, their work, and their physical work environments. San Diego State University Research Foundation (SDSURF) employees who work remotely are responsible for helping SDSURF ensure that their home workspaces comply with general ergonomic best practices. To help employees meet that responsibility, SDSURF has compiled the following resources that employees can use to meet ergonomic best practices while teleworking.

**During telework, SDSURF employees are responsible to:**

1. Utilize the *Checklist: Adjusting and Adapting Your Computer Workstation*
2. Adjust their workstation to fit their work needs
3. Vary work tasks throughout the work shift when feasible
4. Take frequent brief stretch breaks.

Employees should direct any specific questions or concerns to their immediate supervisor.

**SDSURF managers and supervisors of employees who telework are responsible to:**

1. Allow and encourage employees to vary work tasks when feasible
2. Support and encourage brief stretch breaks
3. Address specific employee concerns about ergonomics while teleworking on a case-by-case basis, and bring them to the attention of SDSURF Risk Management ([sdsurfriskmanagement@sdsu.edu](mailto:sdsurfriskmanagement@sdsu.edu)) if necessary.

**Resources:**

- *Checklist: Adjusting and Adapting Your Computer Workstation* (attached)

This checklist is designed to help employees complete a self-assessment of their workstations and make necessary adjustments to meet ergonomics best practices.

- *Ergo Break* (attached)

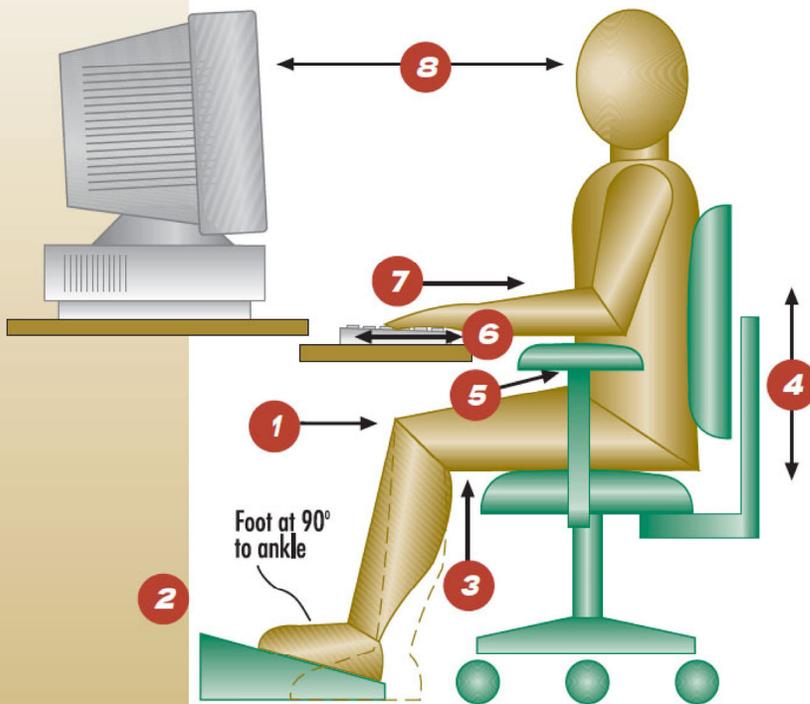
This set of basic exercises offers employees guidance on how to stretch during the workday, both during telework and while in the office.

These Telework Ergonomics Guidelines do not supersede or replace SDSURF's Workers' Compensation information and/or its injury reporting process.

# ADJUSTING AND ADAPTING YOUR COMPUTER WORKSTATION

# CHECKLIST

## A COMFORTABLE POSTURE...

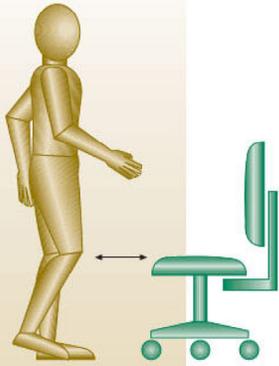


## EVERYTHING WITHIN REACH...

- Place the mouse next to the keyboard and at the same height. (See over, Note 7)
- Document(s) should be on a document-holder that is placed either between the keyboard and the screen or next to and at approximately the same height as the monitor screen.
- A task light improves lighting on the document(s) you are reading. (See over, Note 8)

A properly adjusted workstation allows you to adopt a natural and comfortable posture. To benefit from these adjustments, your work should be properly organized. (See over, Note 9)

- 1 YOUR THIGHS SHOULD BE PARALLEL TO THE FLOOR**
  - Adjust the height and/or angle of the chair seat.
- 2 YOUR FEET SHOULD LAY FLAT ON THE FLOOR OR ON A FOOTREST**
  - Adjust the height of the chair seat. (See over, Note 1)
- 3 BACK OF THE KNEES SHOULD BE CLEAR OF THE FRONT EDGE OF THE SEAT**
  - Adjust the depth of the chair seat so that you can easily place your fist behind your knee.
  - Be sure to specify the appropriate seat depth length when ordering a new chair.
- 4 YOUR BACK: LOWER AND MID-BACK SHOULD BE WELL SUPPORTED**
  - Adjust the height, tension, and angle of the backrest, to ensure the lumbar support is positioned at your waist.
- 5 YOUR FOREARMS SHOULD BE SUPPORTED AND YOUR SHOULDERS RELAXED AT ALL TIMES**
  - The height of and distance between your armrests should allow freedom of movement for your forearms when performing tasks, yet provide support for them during rest periods or when using your mouse.
  - Avoid hunching your shoulders and ensure that the elbows/upper arms remain close to your torso. (If armrests do not adjust, see over, Note 2)
- 6 YOUR ELBOWS SHOULD BE AT APPROXIMATELY THE SAME HEIGHT AS THE KEYBOARD**
  - Adjust the height of your keyboard tray or work surface so the keyboard is at the height of your elbows. (If this is not possible, see over, Notes 3 and 4)
- 7 YOUR WRISTS SHOULD BE STRAIGHT AT ALL TIMES AND YOUR HANDS IN LINE WITH YOUR FOREARMS**
  - Adjust the angle and height of the keyboard tray or work surface to ensure straight wrists.
  - If your keyboard tray or work surface is not adjustable, adjust your seat to ensure straight wrists. You will need to use a footrest if you have raised the seat and your feet are not flat and well supported on the floor. (See over, Notes 4 and 5)
- 8 THE MONITOR SHOULD BE AT A COMFORTABLE READING DISTANCE AND HEIGHT**
  - The viewing distance should be within 16" to 29" (40cm-74cm). About one arm's length.
  - The monitor height should allow the neck to be in a neutral position when looking at the top row of text on the screen. (See over, Note 6)



## NOTE 1 ADJUSTING THE HEIGHT OF YOUR CHAIR SEAT

- Adjust the height of your chair seat so that it is below or at knee height.

## NOTE 2 ARMRESTS

- Your forearms can be supported by armrests. If your armrests are not adjustable, replace with adjustable armrests if possible.

## NOTE 3 WORK SURFACE

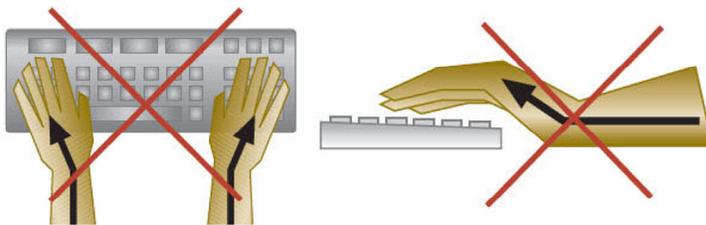
- If your work surface is not adjustable, adjust the height of your chair seat so that your elbows are at the same height as the keyboard.
- The height of the chair should be adjusted considering the height of the work surface and the work being done.

## NOTE 4 FOOTREST

- A footrest may be necessary when the chair is raised for a worker to reach a work surface and when feet are unsupported.
- If a worker moves his or her chair frequently between different work surfaces, more than one footrest may be required.

## NOTE 5 HAND POSITION

- The purpose of a hand/wrist support is to prevent your wrists from resting on hard surfaces during rest periods between keyboard tasks.
- Good habits include avoiding extreme wrist postures, such as those illustrated below.



## NOTE 6 POSITION OF COMPUTER MONITOR

- If you wear bifocals and view the screen with the lower portion of the lenses, it may help to position the monitor lower or tilt it back slightly. (Watch out for glare!)

## NOTE 7 SIZE AND POSITION OF THE MOUSE

- Your mouse should be the proper size to fit your hand and be positioned directly beside your keyboard.
- If you have a keyboard tray that is not wide enough to accommodate the mouse, consider the use of adjustable shelves that may be attached to the work surface or those that may extend the keyboard tray.
- Another option is to eliminate your keyboard tray by placing your keyboard and mouse on the work surface. Note that if you choose this option, remember to apply the necessary adjustments to the chair and monitor height as required.
- Ensure your arms are close to your body while using the mouse.



## NOTE 8 LIGHTING AND GLARE

To avoid glare and increase monitor screen visibility, you can:

- Reduce, eliminate or diffuse any overhead lighting that is reflected on your screen;
- Position your monitor so that your line of vision is parallel to the window;
- Ensure that the monitor screen has a light background colour and dark characters;
- An antiglare screen should be avoided unless other measures are not applicable.

Please note: glare control measures should ensure that a comfortable posture can be maintained.

## NOTE 9 WORK ORGANIZATION

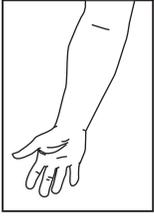
Even the most comfortable posture should be changed periodically.

- Tilt your chair seat and backrest to vary posture;
- Take short breaks frequently to avoid prolonged static postures;
- Alternate work at the computer with non-computer tasks;
- Adopt a work pace that is regular and reasonable for you;
- Periodically look away from the screen to a farther distance;
- Stretch regularly and perform relaxation exercises;
- Swivel your chair to face your next task instead of twisting your body.

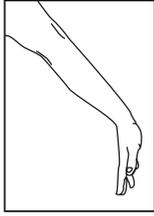
# "ERGO BREAK"

**Note:** If you have had any recent health problems, injury, or surgery, or if any of these actions cause you any pain, consult a health professional before starting this program.

## Finger and Wrist Flexor Stretch



1.



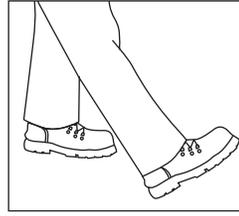
2.



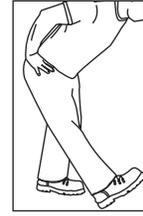
3.

1. Straighten your elbow with palm up.
2. Point your fingers toward floor.
3. Use your other hand to gently pull down on your palm and fingers.
4. Hold for 10 - 15 seconds. You should feel a mild pulling sensation. If you experience discomfort, then perform the stretch more gently or go back to the previous step.

## Hamstring Stretch



1.



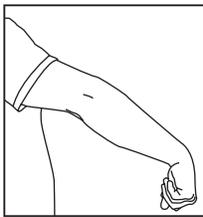
2.

1. Place your heel on ground in front of you with knee straight. You may wish to stand next to something for balance.
2. Keep your back straight, look up at the ceiling, and bend forward at your hips.
3. Hold for 10 - 15 seconds. You should feel a mild pulling sensation. If you experience discomfort, then perform the stretch more gently or with your foot on the floor.

## Finger and Wrist Extensor Stretch



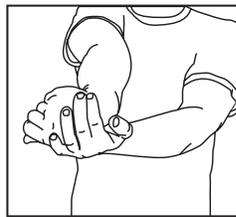
1.



2.



3.



4.

1. Straighten your elbow with palm down.
2. Bend your wrist down and make a gentle fist. If you feel discomfort in the back of your hand, then relax your fingers.
3. Gently pull down on the back of your hand.
4. Rotate your arm so that your hand is pointing away.
5. Hold for 10 - 15 seconds. You should feel a mild pulling sensation. If you experience discomfort, then perform the stretch more gently or go back to the previous step.

## Low Back Flexor Stretch



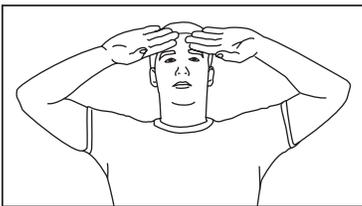
1.



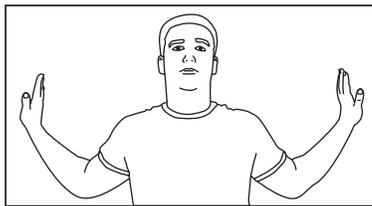
2.

1. Place your hands on your hips.
2. Gently lean back.
3. Hold for 10 - 15 seconds. You should feel a mild pulling sensation. If you experience discomfort, then perform the stretch more gently or go back to the previous step.

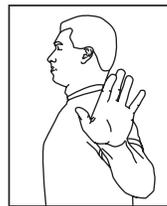
## Neck Shoulder Stretch



1.



2.



3.

1. Place hands in front of forehead with palms facing out. Take a deep breath in.
2. Pull elbows toward back pockets while rotating palms out.
3. Slowly exhale while squeezing shoulder blades together and drawing head back.
4. Once you have fully exhaled, hold for 10 - 15 seconds. Repeat for 2 repetitions. If you experience discomfort, then perform stretch more gently or go back to the previous step.

**The Back School**

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