



Five Tips to Prevent Remote Employee Injuries



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Learning Objectives

In this webinar we will:

- › Review differences in the temporary home office vs. standard office
- › Discuss five strategies to improve remote workplace health
- › Provide examples of office stretches
- › Offer resources for employees & employers in the future

Home Office vs. Standard Office

- › Workers who don't regularly work from home may not have proper office equipment
- › Having a good home office setup presents specific challenges
 - Space within the home can be limited
 - Space may double as a dining room, kitchen counter, or general use area
 - If space is available, it typically does not have adjustability
- › Remote workers move less often than those in an office setting
- › Remote workers tend to work longer
- › The same safety and productivity risks that apply to office workers still affect remote employees

Five Strategies to Improve Remote Workplace Health

- › Create a dedicated work space in the home
- › Ensure proper seating
- › Position hardware/equipment for proper neutral posture
- › Keep an eye on time management
- › Follow healthy habits

Create a Dedicated Work Space

- › Pick a room/area away from distractions and noise
- › Use a table or a desk for a main work surface
- › Make a secondary work area if possible
- › Make sure your workspace has proper lighting to reduce eye strain
- › Ensure your office isn't cluttered and everything you need to work is in reach



Ensure Proper Seating

Proper seating doesn't have to involve expensive office chairs. Here are some simple ways to improve positioning at home:

- › Choose a comfortable chair with padded cushion and back support
- › Avoid sitting on a couch or recliner
- › When sitting:
 - Sit all the way back in the chair with your back against the backrest
 - Your feet should be flat on the floor or a foot rest
- › To increase lumbar/back support, use a pillow or rolled up towel
- › For a long term solution, a proper adjustable chair should be used

Positioning of Hardware/Equipment

Positioning of equipment should promote a comfortable neutral posture to reduce the possibility of discomfort

- › When sitting or standing, the work surface should be at or slightly below your elbow height with your arms and shoulders relaxed
 - If you need to raise your seated height, use a pillow or folded towel



Positioning of Hardware/Equipment

- › Center the monitor/laptop in front of you, in-line with keyboard at approximately arm's length
- › Adjust your monitor/laptop so the top of the display is at or slightly below your eye height
- › Use an external keyboard & mouse directly in front of you near the front edge of the work surface
- › Movement is your friend



Keeping an Eye on Time Management

- › Set some boundaries to create a distinction between home and work
- › Create a routine that includes a start and stop time, breaks, and getting dressed for work
- › Take a micro break at least every 30 minutes (30 sec. to 2 min.)
 - Set timers on your cell phone, watch, or computer
- › Avoid working longer hours
- › Keep a to-do list to stay on task

For a 7.5 hour day:

- 5 hours sitting
- 2 hours standing
- 0.5 hour of moving
- 16 sit-to-stand transitions



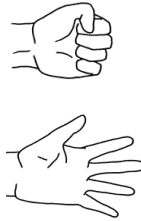
Follow Healthy Habits

- › Stand up and walk around during breaks, phone calls, and when not using the computer
- › Socialize with colleagues
- › Practice the 20-20-20 rule (every 20 min. look 20 ft. away for 20 sec.)
- › Limit your screen time
- › Maintain a meal schedule to limit snacking
- › Stay hydrated
- › Take stretch breaks for your fingers, hands, arms, legs and torso

Example Stretches

Hand stretch

- › Bend the elbows so the forearms are parallel to the floor and palms facing inward
- › Make a tight fist (hold for 3 sec.)
- › Fan out your fingers (hold for 3 sec.)
- › Repeat 10 times



Overhead stretch

- › Lace the fingers together, turn the palms out, and reach towards the ceiling
- › Hold for 15 sec., repeat 2 times



Wrist extension and flexion

- › Lift one arm with the elbow straight just below shoulder level with the palm up
- › With the opposite hand, grasp the palm and pull wrist back towards you to feel a stretch in your forearm
- › Turn the same arm over so the palm is facing down, pull the hand so the fingers are pointing down
- › Hold for 15 sec., repeat 2 times for each arm



Neck stretch

- › Place both hands between your low back and the chair
- › Lower your ear towards your right shoulder while looking forward, hold and return to center
- › Repeat on the other side
- › Hold for 15 sec., repeat 2 times



Example Stretches

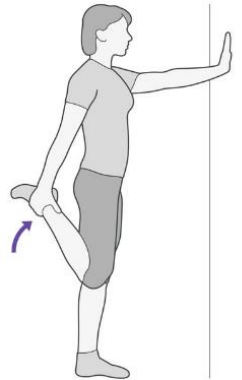
Standing hamstring stretch

- › Stand up straight with your feet slightly apart and arms relaxed
- › Extend one leg forward placing the heel on the floor with toes pointed up
- › Slightly bend the back leg as if starting to sit
- › Place the hands on the hips or thigh of the leg for support
- › Keeping the back straight, bend forward at the hips until a comfortable stretch is felt in the back of the extended leg
- › Hold for 15 sec., repeat 2 times with both legs



Standing quad stretch

- › Stand up straight with your feet slightly apart and arms relaxed
- › Place your left hand on a chair back or wall for support if needed
- › With the right hand, grasp your right pant leg or ankle
- › Pull the ankle up keeping your legs close together with the knee pointing towards the ground
- › Hold for 15 sec., repeat 2 times with both legs



Ergonomics Resources

When remote employees are experiencing discomfort, the following resources are available:

- › Ergonomic tips for your home office
- › Remote telephonic assessments with images or video
- › Standardized equipment list development
- › Ergonomic training

Ergonomic Tips for Your Home Office



Ergonomics can assist you in improving your posture, health, and productivity through proper workstation design. If you find yourself setting up a home office, there are some ergonomic tips you should keep in mind.

Chair

- › Choose a comfortable chair with a padded cushion and back support.
- › Your feet should be flat on the floor, thighs parallel to the floor, and your back against the backrest.
- › If you need to raise your chair height, or need more cushion, place a pillow on the seat.
- › If you need lumbar/back support, use a pillow or rolled up towel.
- › Avoid sitting on a couch, recliner, or bar stool.

Work Surface

- › Use a table or a desk for a work surface. Avoid coffee tables and working on your lap.
- › When sitting, the work surface should be at or slightly below your elbow height.
- › If the desk is too high, raise your chair or add a cushion to the chair.

Keyboard & Mouse

- › Use an external keyboard & mouse directly in front of you near the front edge of the work surface.
- › Keep your arms and shoulders relaxed and close to your body.
- › Keep your forearms, wrists, and hands straight.

Monitor Placement

- › Center the monitor in front of you, in line with the keyboard, at approximately an arm's length.
- › Adjust your monitor/laptop (stack of books) so the top of the display is at or slightly below your eye height.
- › Bifocal or progressive lens wearers may need to lower their monitors to avoid tilting the head back.

Work Environment

- › Setup a designated workspace in an area with minimal distractions.
- › Create a routine that includes a start and stop time, breaks, and getting dressed for work.
 - You can set timers on your cell phone.
- › You should change your working position frequently throughout the day in the following ways:
 - Stand up and walk around for a few minutes every hour.
 - Stand and move for breaks and phone calls when not using the computer.
 - Stretch your fingers, hands, arms, legs, and torso.
 - Stay hydrated.

Visit genexservices.com/ergonomics for more information about our services.

