

SETTING UP A HOME OFFICE

Checklist

Disclaimer: This checklist is intended to provide general advice on how to set up a safe, comfortable and productive home office/workspace. It is not comprehensive or customised to an individual and should be used only as a guide.

You can do desk work comfortably at home if you get the basics right. Here are our top tips on how you can set up a safe, comfortable and productive home office/workspace.

THINGS TO CHECK	MORE TIPS AND RESOURCES
1. Designate a workspace	
<input type="checkbox"/> Try to separate yourself from the domestic part of your home.	Tips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you enter this space, you know it is time to work. When you leave this space, it's time to 'switch off'. • Pack things up at the end of the day so you're not tempted to return to work. • It is important to maintain a daily routine. Make sure you go to bed and get up at the same time.
<input type="checkbox"/> Set expectations with family members / housemates etc (e.g. work times, interruptions).	
2. Find a flat, clear work surface	
<input type="checkbox"/> Enough room for computer/laptop, papers and reference materials?	Tips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It might be the kitchen table or the dining room that works best.
<input type="checkbox"/> Plenty of leg room?	Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to choose a sit-stand desk • Safe laptop use
<input type="checkbox"/> Thighs not squashed against the underside?	
3. Get a separate screen and keyboard	
<input type="checkbox"/> If you're using a laptop and don't have a separate monitor, place your laptop on a stack of books and use a separate keyboard and mouse.	Tips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 700 mm is a good desk height - lower for shorter people. • Desks should be 900 mm deep (front to back) and not be too thick - 30 mm thick (max.). • Minimise laptop keyboard and mouse use – there is a dictation function in Microsoft Word. • If you're making long phone calls, use a headset. • If using a landline and it isn't comfortable or close to you, either get an extension cord or move the phone so walking to it becomes an exercise break.
<input type="checkbox"/> If you must use your laptop as your screen, lift it up so that the top edge of the open screen is just below your eye height	
<input type="checkbox"/> Top of screen and your forehead should be about an arm's length away (a little further away if you have a larger monitor).	
<input type="checkbox"/> Put the things you use a lot within a comfortable arm's reach (e.g. phone, notepad, reference files).	
4. Pick a chair which enables you to sit and work at the right height	
<input type="checkbox"/> Height adjustable?	Tips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't be tempted to buy a multi-adjustable chair (cheap or expensive) just because it is labelled "ergonomic". What matters is whether your set up fits you, enabling comfortable, well-supported posture. • If you don't have a chair with the recommended attributes, it's ok - just remember your lower back should be well supported, your shoulders level, and your feet supported without under-thigh pressure. • If there's reading to be done, relax in a lounge chair. Changing positions during the working day gives important relief too.
<input type="checkbox"/> Separately adjustable backrest?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Seat short enough to allow you sit back in the seat and enjoy full back support?	
<input type="checkbox"/> A five-star base for stability?	
<input type="checkbox"/> A curved, "waterfall" front?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Well padded? You shouldn't be able to feel the seat base under the padding when you're slumped heavily in the chair	

THINGS TO CHECK	MORE TIPS AND RESOURCES
5. Adjust your chair properly	
<input type="checkbox"/> Alter height until your shoulders are relaxed, not slumped, in the working position.	<i>Tips:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the elements of correct posture and practice them!
<input type="checkbox"/> Adjust the backrest.	<i>Resources:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workstation self-assessment guide
<input type="checkbox"/> Seat pan should be flat or sloping slightly downwards? This reduces pressure under your thighs and encourages an 'open hip angle' (hips slightly above knees).	
6. Foot support is essential	
<input type="checkbox"/> Use a footrest if there is still any pressure under your thighs.	<i>Tips:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternatively, lower your desk (if you can) as well as your chair.
7. Ensure good, even lighting	
<input type="checkbox"/> Whole working surface is evenly illuminated, without shadows near your hand?	<i>Tips:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider an extra desk lamp.
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure any light source itself is covered, and is kept out of your field of view.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use curtains to control screen reflections or bright sunlight.
<input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate screen reflections as much as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't sit facing a screen with bright daylight (like a window) beyond and behind the screen. • Too much contrast between screen and background is tiring.
8. Deal with noise and maintain comfortable temperature	
<input type="checkbox"/> Try to manage noise sources where possible (e.g. traffic, barking, maybe even children).	<i>Tips:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider noise cancelling headphones.
<input type="checkbox"/> Climate control in your working environment should make you comfortable, but not sleepy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In hot weather, a simple pedestal fan and light clothing may be sufficient. In cooler weather, try wearing warmer clothes.
9. Take regular breaks	
<input type="checkbox"/> Take regular breaks to rest both your eyes and your muscles – short, frequent breaks are better than long, infrequent breaks.	<i>Tips:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch out for increasing fatigue and soreness, and rest where necessary.
<input type="checkbox"/> Work standing up for a few minutes at a time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get some fresh air and go for a walk around the block.
<input type="checkbox"/> Stay hydrated.	<i>Resources:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It aches right here • Stretch exercises