

Working from home

Ergonomic considerations and well-being

Carys Moggridge

Physiotherapist
Cardiff Blues



**STRENGTH
THROUGH
UNITY**

Working from home – what needs to be considered:

Whilst you are working from home it is important that you avoid any bad habits and set up your work space to help prevent and reduce the risk of any injury or onset of pain from poor positioning and lack of movement.

This guide will aim to show you:

- How to set up your home work space.
- What postural considerations to be aware of.
- Exercise ideas including; stretches and dynamic mobility (both at the desk and away from it), and recommendations for daily activity.



Desk Set up – What should I avoid



blitzresults.com



Desk Set up – What should I avoid?

Whilst at home it can be easy to forget about your posture and how you have set up your work space, especially if you do not have a desk. Make sure that you avoid the following:

- Sitting slouched or off the edge of a chair
- Sitting on your sofa with the laptop on your lap
- Standing and leaning over a low surface
- Staying still for longer than 1 hour



No ones perfect so if you do end up in a bad position make sure you don't end up in it for longer than 20 minutes

Desk Set up – What should I do?

Make sure that you think about the following:

- Sit at a supported desk or if you don't have this, a table i.e. dining room table or kitchen table
- Sit on a supported chair where possible: use cushions for support if needed
- Use a keyboard and mouse if available.
- Try to make sure your laptop screen is at eye level i.e. using a slanted stand or raised on books (if you have a separate keyboard available).
- Change position regularly and try standing with your laptop on a raised surface.

Re-check you position regularly every 20- 30mins if possible!!!!



Desk Set up – Things to consider

Head position



Straight neck - no poking chin

Arms / Forearms

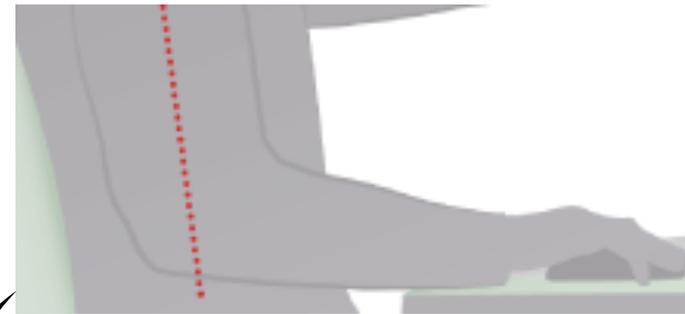


Forearms parallel to desk / table.
Elbows rested / supported at 90 Degrees.
Use a mouse and keyboard where possible.

Screen height



Eyes in line with the top of the screen
Arm width away



Relax shoulders and arms to your side



Desk Set up – positioning ideas:

Back, hips and knees



- ✓ Sit upright and back into the chair
- Hips and knees at 90 degrees where possible

Foot positioning



- ✓ Feet flat rested on a stool if needed

REMEMBER



MOVE EVERY 30 MINS - 1 HOUR, EVEN IF ITS JUST TO WALK AROUND THE ROOM, GET A DRINK OR STAND UP.



Posture – Do's

- ✓ Keep shoulders down and relaxed
- ✓ Keep your neck lengthened and head straight
- ✓ Keep your mid and lower back upright when sitting and standing
- ✓ Support your back when sitting
- ✓ Move every 30 mins - 1 hour



Posture - Do Nots

- X Forward head
- X Shoulders forward and raised
- X Hips / Knee dropped lower than 90 Degrees
- X Heels lifted (on your tip toes)
- X Legs crossed
- X Leaning forward / on edge of chair



Exercise at the Desk

It is important to keep moving to help avoid any pain or dysfunctions occurring from long periods in sustained postures. You can do this whilst sitting or standing. The following slides will show you some of the most effective stretches and mobility exercises for each area of the body.

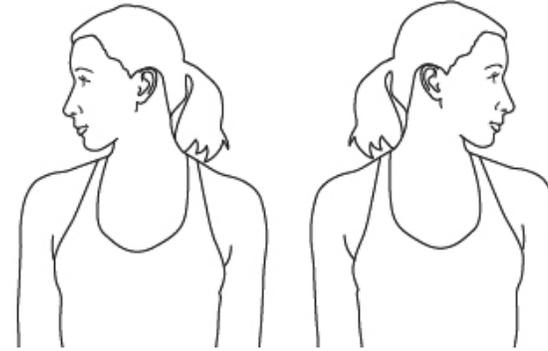
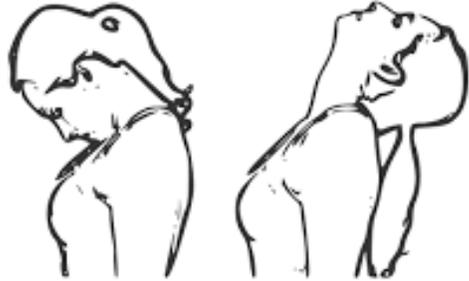
Make sure that these are comfortable and you only take them into the range of movement that is right for you. Repeat these 2 times.



1/ Neck mobility and stretches

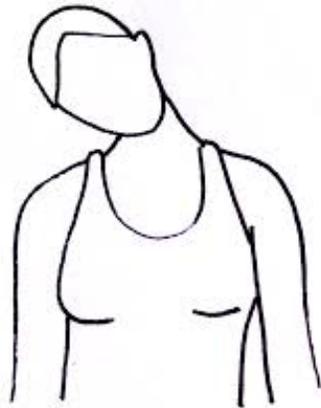
- Slow and controlled neck movement in all directions

Move the neck forward, back and rotate x 5 each side.



- Neck side flexion mobility

Sit on your hand and move your ear to the opposite shoulder until you feel a stretch, slowly return to the start position. Repeat this x 5 each side. For further mobility hold the stretch for 20 - 30 secs x 3 times after.



Increase your stretch by using your opposite hand to gently pull the head to the side.

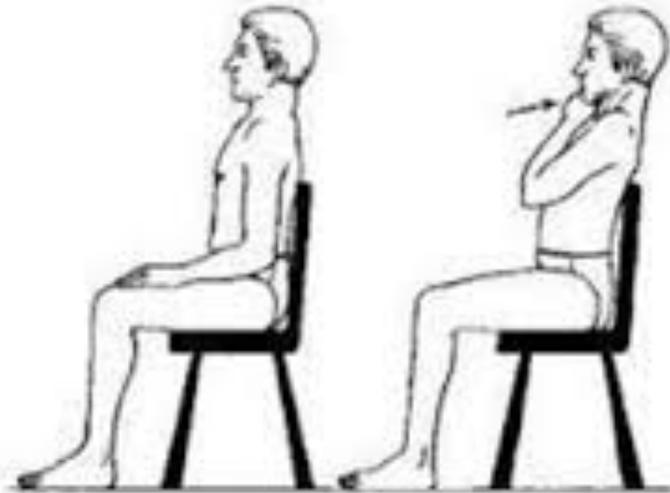


©PhysioTools Ltd



- Neck retraction

Sitting upright in the chair and tuck your chin back to lengthen the back of the neck.
Hold x 5 secs and repeat x 5 - 10.



- Advanced neck stretches

Sitting Yoga Eagle

Cross one arm over the other, relax your shoulders.

Look down and slowly raise your arms to 90 degrees until you feel a stretch over the top of your shoulders

Hold for 20-30secs x 3 or slowly move in and out of the movement 5 times.



LS stretch

Sitting holding onto the side of the chair with one hand.

Look down and rotate your head towards your opposite arm. Use the other hand to gently pull the head down until you feel a stretch.

Hold x 20-30 secs, repeat x 3



2/ Shoulder Exercises

- Shrugs

In sitting or standing. Shrug your shoulders up towards your ears and draw them back down from the bottom of your shoulder blades. Repeat x 10.

- Scapula (shoulder blade) retraction

Drop your shoulder blades down and in as if there is a string dropping them down to the opposite hip. Hold x 5 secs, Repeat x 10.



3/ Mid Back mobility

- Spinal rotations in sitting

Sit upright in the chair and rotate your back towards one side, slowly return to the starting position. Repeat x 5.



- Back extension over chair

Sit upright and place your hands across your chest or behind your head. Slowly extend your back, do not hold. Repeat x 5



4/ Lower back and hip mobility

- Sitting Pelvic tilts

Sitting upright towards the edge of the chair. Slowly tilt your pelvis back towards the back of the chair keeping your upper back straight (tuck your bottom under). Repeat x 10.

Sitting glut stretch



Place one foot onto the opposite leg so that the knee is facing out. Gently push onto your thigh. To increase the stretch lean forward keeping your back straight.

Repeat x 5 or hold for 20-30sec x 3

Sitting hamstring stretch



Sit on the edge of the chair. Place one leg out in front with a slight bend. Keep your back straight and slowly lean forward until you feel a stretch into the back of your thigh.

Repeat slowly x 5 or hold x 20-30secs x 3

5/ Lower leg

-Sitting heel raises or marches

Sitting upright slowly raise you heels and slowly lower them. Repeat x 10.



Sitting upright slowly march your feet up and down. Repeat x 10



Exercises away from the desk

Now that you are working from home there is no excuse not to do some exercises away from your desk. Try some of the following exercises to break up the day and move more effectively.

Repeat these 2 times!



Exercises away from the desk

- **Mid Back / Upper back**

- Thread the needle

Start in four point kneeling. Reach your arm under and through to rotate your back. Repeat x 5. On your last stretch hold the arm across the body until you feel a stretch in the back of the shoulder hold x 20 - 30se



- Cat / Cow

Start in four point kneeling. Slowly curve your mid back to the ceiling (like a cat). Return to the starting position and reverse so that your back dips and pelvis rotates forward. Repeat x 5.



- Arm openings

Start lying on your side arms together. Rotate your back and follow your arm with your head as it opens up. Keep your shoulders down and hips forward (stacked on top of each other). Repeat x 4 each



- Pectoral stretch against a wall

In standing place the arm into a door frame at 90 degrees at both the shoulder and elbow. Relax your shoulder and slowly rotate your body away from the wall until you feel a stretch in the front of your chest. Repeat x 5 slowly and hold x 20-30sec x 2/3.



- **Lower back and lower limbs**

Shell stretch

Start in 4 point kneeling. Slowly take your bottom to your heels, keeping your arms forwards. Do not let your shoulders lift. Hold x 5 secs, repeat x 5 - 10.



Back extension

Lie on to your stomach. Slowly come up onto your forearms, hold for 5 secs and lower. If you are able increase your stretch onto your hands (keep your hips down).

Repeat x 5.



Bridge

Lie on your back knees bent. Roll your pelvis back, to flatten your back into to floor. Tightening your bottom and lift your hips off the floor. (peel your spine up) Lower slowly. Repeat x 5 - 10

Make this harder but progressing to single leg.



Knee Rocks

Lying on your back knee together arms out to the side. Slowly rock your knees to one side, keeping your hip down and return to the start position. Repeat x 5 each side.



Roll downs - inch worms

In standing, slowly roll down to the floor (or as far as you can), hold x 5 secs and return slowly to standing. Repeat x 3-5. Progress this by rolling down, keep the knees soft. As you reach the floor slowly walk your hands out into a plank position and walk them back in. Slowly roll back up, repeat x 3-5.

Key tip: keep you lower tummy tightened.

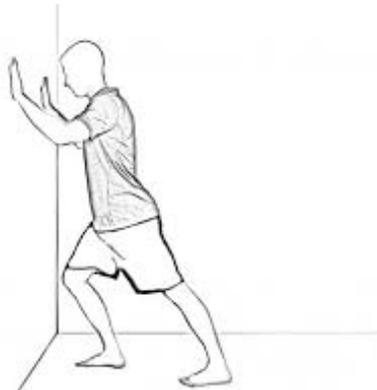
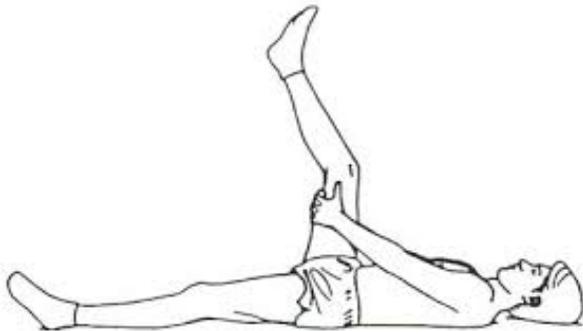


Leg mobility

Hamstring

Calf

Hip flexor



Move knee up and down x 10

Move slowly in and out of the movement x 10

Tuck pelvis and keep back straight slow movement x 10

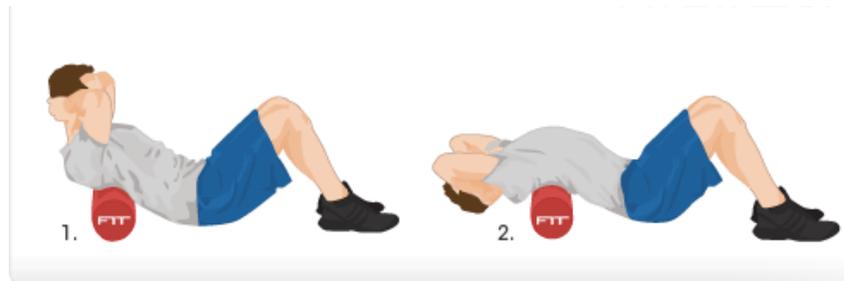
- **Equipment mobility (if available)**

Foam rolling

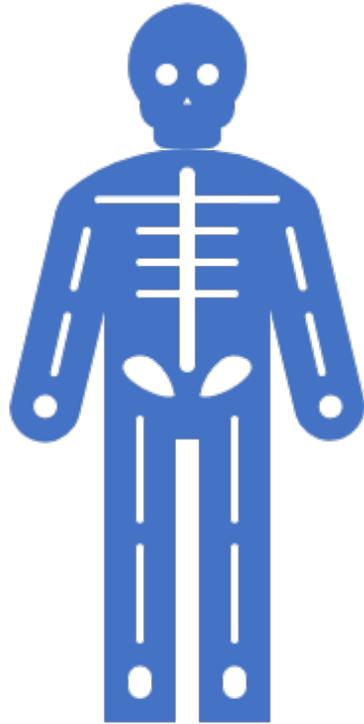
This can be good for further mobility into the mid and lower back.

Lacrosse ball / tennis ball self massage

If you are feeling stiff in your neck and mid back muscles using a tennis ball may help to temporarily ease this alongside mobility exercises.



Exercise for your well being



Whilst working at home and travelling less it is important that you continue to keep yourselves active through exercise for both your physical and mental health. This can be achieved in various ways:

- Stick to a diary, or plan your day like you would if you were going to the office.
- Keep getting outside, go for regular walks or runs. Do this either in your break or at the end of your working day.
- Try home workouts! Cardiovascular workouts, yoga, pilates and resistance exercises will be readily available online.

TIP: order some resistance bands, dumbbells or kettlebells, these are great for increasing your resistance training if the gym is not available and will help maintain your strength and fitness.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Monitor and alter your sitting or standing posture every 20 - 30 minutes.
- Make sure you have taken into consideration how your work space is set up at home.
- Move regularly and try some mobility exercises either in the chair or away from the desk throughout the day.
- Keep exercising and get outside to enjoy some fresh air.

