

Temporary Home Offices

Working from home, especially on a temporary basis, can produce unique challenges that we are not used to dealing with in a dedicated office. Here are some helpful hints to increase comfort and productivity in your temporary home office.

Laptops are portable, light weight, and great for doing our work and staying connected in different venues. Unfortunately, a compact design with attached screen and keyboard forces users into awkward postures. When the screen is at the right height, the keyboard is positioned too high. When the keyboard is at the right height, the screen is too low. Here are some quick tips to reduce aches, pains, and potential injury.

If you use a laptop at a desk or on a table in your home

- Use an external monitor when possible.
- Place the top of the screen at about eye level, or slightly lower if using progressive lens glasses.
- Use a laptop stand or place your laptop on a stable support surface, such as an empty box or reams of paper so that the screen height can be raised.
- Use an external keyboard and mouse. The keyboard and mouse should be positioned at or slightly below standing/sitting elbow height.
- The work area is adequately illuminated with lighting not directly in front of or behind the monitor. Use curtains or shades/blinds to decrease glare.
- If you have a sharp edge to the desk or table, fold a dishtowel and place it at the edge to prevent contact and cushion your forearms from any sharp edges.
- To avoid creating trip hazards, make sure to manage cords as best as you can. Do not place cords in major walking paths.



Use external monitor, keyboard, & mouse



Prop laptop up & use external keyboard & mouse



Place folded towel to cushion forearms from sharp edges



Place cords closer to walls and away from major walkways

If you use a laptop without a table or desk

- Use a chair that supports sitting in a comfortable upright or slightly reclined posture.
- Position your laptop in your lap for the most neutral wrist posture that you can achieve.
- Open the laptop to the widest angle to allow you to look out towards the screen and not just straight down in your lap.



Open laptop screen to wide angle when on your lap

- In a reclined, supported position, prop your feet up to raise the monitor and keyboard height.
- Make sure you place a barrier between the top of your thighs and the heat from the laptop's battery.

Prop your feet up
and rest laptop on
your knees to raise
screen



General Considerations for safely working from home

- Exits are free of obstructions.
- The area is well ventilated and temperature controlled.
- Storage is organized to minimize risks of fire and spontaneous combustion.
- All extension cords have grounding conductors.
- Exposed or frayed wiring and cords are repaired or replaced immediately upon detection.
- Electrical enclosures (switches, outlets, receptacles, junction boxes) have tight-fitting covers or plates.
- Surge protectors are used for computers, monitors, and printers.
- Heavy items are securely placed on sturdy objects (i.e. tables, counters, desks).
- Computer components are kept out of direct sunlight and away from heaters.

Emergency Preparedness

- Emergency phone numbers (hospital, fire department, police department) are posted within easy reach.
- A first aid kit is easily accessible and replenished as needed.
- Work area has smoke and carbon monoxide detector(s) for early emergency detection.