

CORONAVIRUS
PROTECT YOURSELF & OTHERS

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Checklist

Following the recent events many of you will have been asked to work from home for a prolonged period. Most of us will be working using a laptop in the best ways we can.

This is a checklist you can use to review your home working arrangements.

1. Using a Table and Chair
2. Using a Raised Surface as Standing Workstation
3. Using a Sofa or other Lounge Chair
4. Taking Breaks, Hydration and Exercise

1. Using a Table and Chair

Good Practice	Why this is important?	Hints and Tips	Your Notes/Plans
1.1 Do you have a table or desk you can use for sitting at and working from? <i>If No, go to Section 2.</i>			
<p>a) The table/desk area is large enough to enable you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ place your laptop ○ move a mouse alongside the laptop or keyboard ○ locate any paperwork that needs to be consulted. 	<p><i>A constrained or twisted posture can result in pains in the hands, wrists, neck or shoulders.</i></p> <p><i>You must be able to move your mouse by arm movements and not by twisting at your wrist or using your fingers.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Remove any non-essential items, keep your workspace tidy and leave enough space to move the mouse in all directions. 💡 Find another piece of furniture to place alongside to hold paperwork such that you do not need to twist to read/access items. 	
<p>b) The table/desk has sufficient room to place your legs.</p>	<p><i>Twisting your legs under can lead to stiffness/pain in your lower limbs.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Are there any items underneath that can be relocated? Can the table/desk be moved away from the wall? 	

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<p>c) The table/desk is in a location where you will not be facing a window or have a window directly behind you.</p>	<p><i>Glare from windows (or lights) will make it hard to read the screen and strain your eyes.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 See if the table/desk can be moved to be at right angles to the window, close curtains or blinds. 💡 Adjust the display brightness/contrast if necessary. 💡 If you are using an application with a dark background and light text, see if it has an option to use a white/grey background and dark text. 	
<p>d) The table/desk is in a location that is free from drafts.</p>	<p><i>Cold drafts across the back or legs can lead to discomfort and pain.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 See if the table/desk can be moved or drafts blocked at source. 	
<p>1.2 Have you found the best chair to use and adjusted it, so it is comfortable to sit on?</p>			
<p>a) You have a firm, upright chair that fits under the table/desk.</p>	<p><i>An upright posture is essential to support the weight of your upper body through your spine.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 A dining chair may be the best substitute if you do not have a computer chair at home. 	
<p>b) Seated on the chair, with your fingers resting on the keyboard, your forearms are in a horizontal position.</p>	<p><i>This is to keep the wrists straight, avoiding strain on the tendons.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 You may need to put a pillow or cushion on the seat to adjust your seated height. 	
<p>c) Your lower legs are upright with your feet resting flat on the floor.</p>	<p><i>This is so your upper legs are supported by the seat and the lower legs are supported on the floor.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 If your feet are off the floor with the seat height correctly adjusted, see if you can find something to act as a footrest. 	
<p>d) The chair provides support for your lower back.</p>	<p><i>The curve of the spine in the lower back needs to be maintained to support the weight of the upper body.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 You may be able to use a pillow or cushion, possibly held in place with an item of clothing, as a support to your lower back. 	

Good Practice	Why this is important?	💡 Hints and Tips	Your Notes/Plans
1.3 Is your laptop in a suitable position for comfortable viewing?			
<p>a) Seated upright on your chair, the top of the laptop monitor should ideally be at eye level or just below.</p> <p><i>Note: If you wear multifocal/varifocal spectacles, you may need to have the screen lower so that it falls into the reading area of your glasses.</i></p>	<p><i>If the screen is significantly below eye height, your head will be held tilted downwards, generating strain on the neck muscles and upper spine.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Plug in a separate keyboard and mouse if you have them and then raise the laptop up on books or similar. 💡 You are permitted to purchase a separate keyboard, mouse and laptop stand from an on-line supplier and claim back costs through expenses (up to defined limits). 💡 Without a separate keyboard, you can still raise the back of the laptop by a smaller amount using a book or similar, putting a shallow slope on the keyboard. This may be the best compromise for those wearing multifocal/varifocal spectacles 	
<p>b) The top of the screen is positioned at least an arm's length away.</p>	<p><i>Positioned too close, your eye muscles cannot relax and will become fatigued.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 If the laptop has to be further away as you are using a separate keyboard, you may need to change the font sizes on your screen to make sure they remain easily readable. 	

2. Using a Raised Surface as Standing Workstation

Good Practice	Why this is important?	Hints and Tips	Your Notes/Plans
2.1 Are you using a raised surface as a standing workstation? <i>If No, go to Section 3.</i>			
<p>a) The surface is large enough to enable you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ place your laptop ○ move a mouse alongside the laptop or keyboard ○ locate any paperwork that needs to be consulted. 	<p><i>A constrained or twisted posture can result in pains in the hands, wrists, neck or shoulders.</i></p> <p><i>You must be able to move your mouse by arm movements and not by twisting at your wrist or using your fingers.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Remove any non-essential items, keep your workspace tidy and leave enough space to move the mouse in all directions. 💡 Find another piece of furniture to place alongside to hold paperwork such that you do not need to twist to read/access items. 	
<p>b) Standing at the surface, with your fingers resting on the keyboard, your forearms are in a horizontal position.</p>	<p><i>This is to keep the wrists straight, avoiding strain on the tendons.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Find a surface which is around, or just below, elbow height. 💡 An ironing board may provide an adjustable height work surface, if it is stable enough and you can place something on it to provide a hard surface to operate a mouse from. 💡 Use books, a tray or other items to adjust the height of the surface for keyboard and mouse use. 	
<p>c) The chosen surface has space at floor level for your feet.</p>	<p><i>Leaning forward to access the computer or standing back from the surface can put strain on your spine.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Choose a suitable item of furniture. Kitchen work surfaces, for example, have kick boards set back at floor level to enable you to stand close the surface. 	

Good Practice	Why this is important?	💡 Hints and Tips	Your Notes/Plans
<p>d) The selected surface is in a location where you will not be facing a window or have a window directly behind you.</p>	<p><i>Glare from windows (or lights) will make it hard to read the screen and strain your eyes.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 See if the item of furniture can be moved to be at right angles to the window, close curtains or blinds. 💡 Adjust the display brightness/contrast if necessary. 💡 If you are using an application with a dark background and light text, see if it has an option to use a white/grey background and dark text. 	
<p>e) The surface is in a location that is free from drafts</p>	<p><i>Cold drafts across the back or legs can lead to discomfort and pains</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 See if the item of furniture can be moved or drafts blocked at source 	

2.2 Is your laptop in a suitable height for comfortable viewing?

<p>a) Standing upright, the top of the laptop monitor should ideally be at eye level or just below.</p> <p><i>Note: If you wear multifocal/varifocal spectacles, you may need to have the screen lower so that it falls into the reading area of your glasses</i></p>	<p><i>If the screen is significantly below eye height, your head will be held tilted downwards, generating strain on the neck muscles and upper spine.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Plug in a separate keyboard and mouse if you have them and then raise the laptop up on books or similar. 💡 You are permitted to purchase a separate keyboard, mouse and laptop stand from an on-line supplier and claim back costs through expenses (up to defined limits). 💡 Without a separate keyboard, you can still raise the back of the laptop by a smaller amount using a book or similar, putting a shallow slope on the keyboard. This may be the best compromise for those wearing multifocal/varifocal spectacles 	
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Good Practice	Why this is important?	Hints and Tips	Your Notes/Plans
b) The top of the screen is positioned at least an arm's length away.	<i>Positioned too close, your eye muscles cannot relax and will become fatigued</i>	💡 If the laptop has to be further away as you are using a separate keyboard, you may need to change the font sizes on your screen to make sure they remain easily readable.	

3. Using a Sofa or other Lounge Chair

Good Practice	Why this is important?	Hints and Tips	Your Notes/Plans
<p>3.1 Do you have to use your laptop seated on a sofa or lounge chair, but have an over-bed table (or similar) that provides a stable elevated surface?</p> <p><i>If Yes, go to Section 1 and apply guidance (as far as is applicable)</i></p> <p><i>If No, then apply following guidance when using laptop on your lap...</i></p>			
a) The sofa/chair is upright and provides support for your back and lower arms.	<p><i>An upright posture is essential to support the weight of your upper body through your spine.</i></p> <p><i>Holding your arms up unsupported will place strain on your shoulders</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Select an upright chair, with arms if available 💡 Use cushions to support your lower back and help you to sit upright. 	
b) The sofa/chair is in a location where you will not be facing a window or have a window directly behind you.	<i>Glare from windows (or lights) will make it hard to read the screen and strain your eyes.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Select a seating position that is at right angles to windows, or close curtains or blinds. 💡 Adjust the display brightness/contrast if necessary. 💡 If you are using an application with a dark background and light text, see if it has an option to use a white/grey background and dark text. 	

Good Practice	Why this is important?	💡 Hints and Tips	Your Notes/Plans
<p>c) The sofa/chair is in a location that is free from drafts.</p>	<p><i>Cold drafts across the back or legs can lead to discomfort and pains</i></p>	<p>💡 See if the sofa/chair can be moved or drafts blocked at source.</p>	
<p>3.2 Have you found a way to support the laptop so the screen is raised to the best viewing height when you are seated upright?</p>			
<p>a) The top of the laptop monitor is close to eye level or just below</p> <p><i>Note: If you wear multifocal/varifocal spectacles, you may need to have the screen lower so that it falls into the reading area of your glasses.</i></p> <p>b) With your fingers resting on the keyboard, your forearms are in a horizontal position.</p>	<p><i>If the screen is significantly below eye height, you will generate strain on the neck muscles and upper spine.</i></p> <p><i>If your forearms are not horizontal, this can generate strain on the tendons in your wrists</i></p>	<p>💡 You will need to find the best compromise between keyboard/touchpad height and screen height</p> <p>💡 You can lift the height of the laptop using a suitable laptop stand designed for this purpose (e.g. Lavolta, Neewer)</p> <p>💡 Alternatively, you place the laptop on a tray (or similar), on top of a cushion on your lap</p> <p> Never place laptop directly on fabric surface due to risk of overheating.</p>	
<p>c) The top of the screen is positioned at least an arm's length away.</p>	<p><i>Positioned too close, your eye muscles cannot relax and will become fatigued.</i></p>	<p>💡 You may need to change the font sizes on your screen to make sure they remain easily readable.</p>	

4. Taking Breaks, Hydration and Exercise

Good Practice	Why this is important?	Hints and Tips	Your Notes/Plans
<p>4.1 Have you established a working pattern that enables you to take breaks from using the computer and to keep hydrated?</p>			
<p>a) Your work regime enables you to regularly stretch/exercise your back, shoulders and legs.</p>	<p><i>Working on a computer for long periods involves static postures that put pressure on your spine, upper limbs and limit blood circulation in the legs.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Build in breaks away from the workstation of at least 2-5 minutes per hour, more frequently if you have a standing workstation or are seated on a sofa or lounge chair. 💡 If taking a call, use the opportunity to get up and move around. 💡 Use exercises on the most affected parts of your body. 	
<p>b) Your work regime enables you to look away from the screen and relax your eyes on a regular basis.</p>	<p><i>Focusing your eyes on a screen for a prolonged period places prolonged stress on your eye muscles and can dry out your eyes.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Every 20 minutes or so, take the opportunity to focus out the window or objects at least 3m away. 💡 If taking a call, use the opportunity to look out a window or at least to move away from the screen 💡 Use exercises for your eyes, including refocusing and blinking. 	
<p>c) You regularly take drinks especially water whilst working.</p>	<p><i>It is important for health to maintain hydration, especially as computer equipment generates dry heat.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Have drinks available (though taking care to minimise risk of spills on to your laptop!) 💡 Use rest breaks as an opportunity to take drinks. 	

END OF CHECKLIST