

ERGONOMICS TIPS FOR REMOTE SCHOOLING

Schooling at home may seem simple, but it is much harder than it looks. When a student is provided with a laptop computer or other device, to aid in the learning process, there are some things to consider for reducing stresses to their body. Below are some good practices to follow so they do not develop bad habits now that can contribute to discomfort down the road.

Find the Best Physical Workspace in the Home*



- Create a workstation where their elbows are bent at 90 degrees and the same height as the keyboard.
- Use a pillow to elevate their height and another one for back support.
- Place a box or rolled up yoga mat on the floor for foot support and to position the knees at a 90-degree angle.
- The laptop is not designed to be used for long periods of time as a stand-alone device.



- Provide an external keyboard and mouse and place the laptop on books or an angled holder to raise the monitor to eye level.
- If the desk is too high, place the keyboard and mouse on a wider game board box on the lap.
- Place the monitor at an arm's length away or slightly closer for good visual clarity.



• Reduce glare by turning off overhead lights behind the monitor. Use task lighting on the keyboard and mouse only. Place monitor perpendicular to windows.



- Stand and use the computer for 30 minutes. Place the laptop directly on the counter or elevate the laptop and use an external keyboard and mouse.





- For short periods of time, sitting on the floor with an external keyboard and mouse on a game board box and the laptop up higher on a table might be useful.
- Use back support when sitting on floor or couch



Areas of the House to Avoid While Using the Computer



- Sitting or lying on the bed
- Lying on the stomach on floor or couch
- Sitting at a desk area that is too tall



Other Things to Consider

- Cognitive overload is reduced by changing positions frequently and building in play and physical movement time.
- Creating a structured day helps develop a stimulating routine for younger students.
- Using headphones can improve posture and focus but remember to keep the volume at 60% of the range to save the eardrums.
- Protect the eyes by following the 20/20/20 rule - every 20 minutes look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

Resources:

Be Well at Work Ergonomics: <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/bewellatwork/ergonomics>

<https://uhs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/ergo-altworkstationtips20.pdf>

Laptop ergonomics: <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/laptopergonomics.pdf>

*Special thanks to Ameya Ryan for posing for the photographs!