Home Office Ergonomics

Things to consider when setting up your home office

Location: The location of your computer setup at home should be well lit and allow you to sit lined up with your keyboard and mouse so that you are not reaching to type or bending your wrists. Keep the immediate area free of clutter and trip hazards. Add task lighting if the overhead lights or floor lamps do not provide adequate lighting. Be aware of any twisting posture and check to make sure your leg space under your desk or table allows for your legs to sit in front of you and is not blocked by clutter.

Chair: Use a chair that provides back support and cushioning for your legs. You may need to add a lumbar pillow or seat cushion if you do not have an ergonomic office chair. Your feet should rest on the floor, if the chair is too tall for you use a footrest or something similar so that you can keep your knees directly in line with your hips, or slightly below.
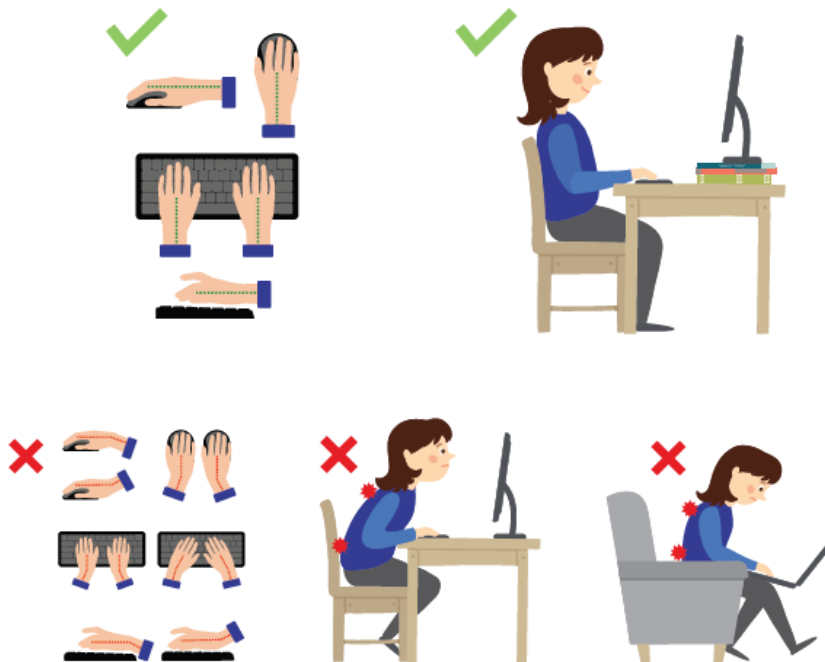
Typing: If using a laptop, it is recommended to use a separate mouse and keyboard. Sit up straight, roll your shoulders back, drop your arms down at your sides, and place your hands out in front of you so that you have a 90-degree angle at your elbow. If your wrist or palms rest on a hard edge or surface when using the keyboard and mouse use a gel wrist rest or similar cushion for support.

Computer Screen: The computer monitor should be positioned so the top of the screen is at eye level and within arm's length. You may have to set your laptop on a stand or stack of books and use external input devices. If you have glare from windows use blinds or curtains to control sunlight.

Additional Tips
  ➢ If you find that your desk or table is too low, try raising it with blocks.
  ➢ If your keyboard is too high, try raising your chair and using a footrest so that you maintain the weight balance and 90-degree angle at the hips. An empty box or three-ring binder can be used as a footrest.
  ➢ If the chair you are using does not have a natural S curve in it, add a small throw pillow or rolled-up towel, secured in place. You can also purchase a lumbar pillow for more support.
  ➢ If your chair isn't high enough, try sitting on a pillow.
  ➢ Avoid twisting of the spine and reaching. Position things such as phones, scanners, and number pads close so that you can avoid reaching.
  ➢ A rolled-up washcloth or small towel can be used as a wrist rest for your mouse or keyboard.
  ➢ Try to avoid glare on your screen. Be intentional about the positioning of monitor and window glare. Pull the window shade if you need to.

- Hold your phone or use a headset instead of cradling it between your neck and shoulder.
- Rest your eyes! Be sure to blink regularly! Close your eyes periodically to help avoid eye strain. A popular tip is the 20-20-20 rule. Every 20 minutes take a 20-second break from looking at your monitor. During the break, look at something that's 20 feet away from you to vary your focus.
- Make sure you are taking your 15-minute and lunch breaks away from the computer, move around and give your eyes and body and chance to rest and recover.
- Alternate positions throughout the day, if possible, find a spot where you can stand and work to change things up.
- If you would like assistance or have questions, contact your safety coordinator at HHS Human Resources hhshumanresources@mt.gov ; a virtual ergonomic assessment can be scheduled.

Resources:

MT ErgoFit Ergonomic Solutions: https://www.mtergofit.com/Montana-Ergonomics.php

Montana State Fund: https://www.montanastatefund.com/web/