

Environmental Health and Safety

Laptops and You



A laptop is the perfect trade-off between functionality and awkward postures. When the screen is right...the keyboard is too high. When the keyboard is right...the screen is too low. This trade-off leads to poor postures and pain in the back, neck, head, wrists and hands. Common locations for using laptops are: on the couch, in a lounge chair, on a bed or on the floor. Common postures are: hunched over, lounging and laying on your stomach.



Neutral Postures

- Neck aligned with spine
- Back relaxed and supported
- Shoulders relaxed
- Wrists and hands straight
- Elbows close to body and bent between 90 and 120 degrees

Transporting Your Laptop

- Laptops are Heavy!
- Carry laptop with wheeled case or backpack with wide, padded shoulder straps and sturdy hip belt
- Switch hands or shoulders frequently when carrying with handle or shoulder strap
- Lighten your load by purchasing lighter models, if possible, of laptops and carrying cases, and remove unnecessary items from the mix
- When carrying with binders, files and additional items consider separate cases to balance the load



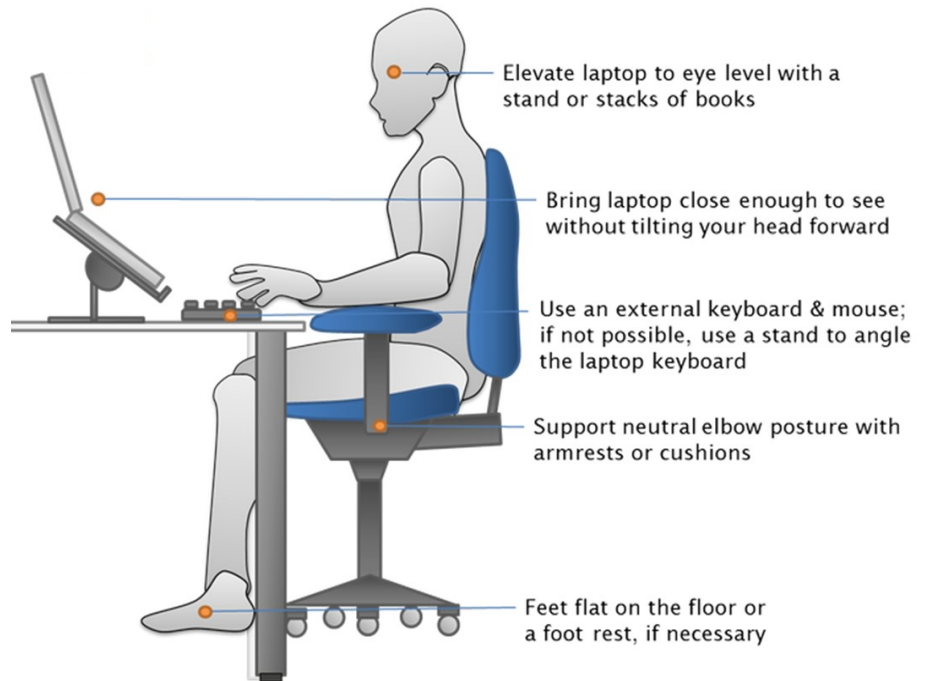
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Steps for Better Ergonomics While Using Laptops

Long Term Use

(More Than One Hour)

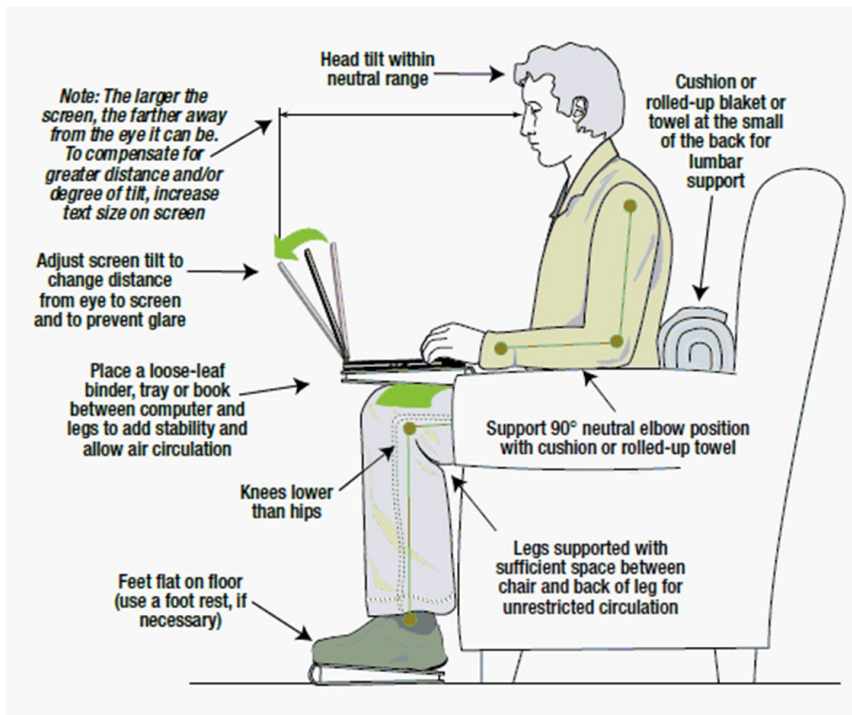
- Maintain neutral neck posture by placing top of screen at eye level or slightly lower for bifocals.
- Use an external monitor, laptop stand or place laptop on stable surface so screen height can be adjusted.
- Use external keyboard and mouse as needed.



Short Term Use

(Less Than One Hour)

- Place laptop on your lap to help keep wrists straight. Use a binder or other stable surface to add stability and height.
- Use a chair that supports a comfortable upright or slightly reclined position. Use a rolled towel or pillow for back support if needed.
- Tilt screen to maintain a neutral posture.



Resources

[CDC: Ergonomics](#)

[Ergonomics.org](#)

[OSHA: Ergonomics](#)

[Clark Ergonomics Page](#)

[Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors](#)

**Ergonomics: The scientific study of people at work.
Reducing challenges associated with overuse, posture and repetition.**