



Office ergonomics - staff

Postural discomfort and musculoskeletal injury are identified as workplace health and safety risks for staff who work at a computer workstation or who perform highly sedentary roles, particularly if the same position is maintained for extended periods of time.

Changing your posture frequently is the most effective strategy to minimise musculoskeletal discomfort for computer based work. Regardless of how well your computer desk is setup - move often! You should aim to change posture every 30 minutes throughout the day.

You can do this by:

- Using prompts/reminders to get up and move e.g. desktop timers/reminders
- Stand up during phone calls or Teams meetings if able to use a Bluetooth/wireless headset
- Taking the stairs instead of the lift - even for part of the journey
- Walk to a colleague rather than always emailing or phoning (when appropriate)
- Walking to the printer/fax/photocopier/rubbish bin
- Varying work tasks to change posture frequently throughout the day
- Eating your lunch away from your desk, going for a walk outside if possible
- Taking part in lunch time stretches/exercise sessions
- Aiming to incorporate at least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week – you/your co-workers may form a group that walk after work or at lunch time.

Computer workstation setup

The regular review of your computer workstation set up and management of tasks aims to identify and rectify issues before they are problematic e.g. address a minor postural discomfort *before* it becomes a musculoskeletal injury. A well-designed workstation that has been adjusted correctly can also reduce the risk of exposure to musculoskeletal injuries and improve your overall comfort and productivity.

Office ergonomics information and training is provided so you can correctly use and adjust your own workstation as well as arrange work tasks to minimise the risk of injury. This can be accessed in a number of ways including:

- Viewing the [Office Ergonomics Information Session](#) (PowerPoint Presentation)
- Using the [Computer Workstation Setup Self-Assessment](#)
 - You should undertake the self-assessment when you commence at a new workplace, move to a new workstation or work in desk sharing arrangements e.g. “hot desking”.
 - This is most effective when completed in small groups or in pairs as it allows the one person to sit at their workstation while another observes their posture and assists in adjusting the workstation.
 - After completion, be sure to return the form to your manager/supervisor and discuss any actions or requirements with them.
- Viewing the [Setting up your workstation](#) webinar (DoE staff only)
- Using the [Checking your workstation set-up](#) poster (page 4)
- Seeking further support from your manager/supervisor if required (see also ‘Further Information/resources’ section overleaf).



Staff with physical discomfort or injury

The Workstation Ergonomics Flowchart (page 3) describes the process to follow if you have ongoing discomfort or injury. In the event of a work related incident, you must advise your manager/supervisor to ensure compliance with departmental procedure: [Health, safety and wellbeing incident management](#).

In the event of ongoing postural discomfort after completing a self-assessment and trialling adjustments, be sure to notify your manager/supervisor and request an ergonomic workstation assessment.

If you have an injury, illness or medical condition being impacted by your computer workstation, consult your treating doctor and seek written medical advice. Your doctor may recommend modifications to work tasks, hours/days of work and/or the workstation. In these instances, the Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator (RRTWC) in your workplace should be contacted to provide additional information and assistance to you and your manager/supervisor.

Sit/stand workstations

Sit/stand workstations are a way of incorporating postural changes while undertaking sedentary work tasks and enable those with medical conditions to stand for periods of time while working. They are not a complete solution to sedentary work however and may introduce new hazards into the workplace unless they are appropriately managed and adjusted. **Simply using a sit/stand workstation will not replace the need for general physical activity within the workplace.**

Sit/stand workstations are not suitable for everyone and can aggravate existing injuries/medical conditions or present a risk for new injury if used inappropriately. Conditions such as arthritis and varicose veins can be aggravated by increased standing as can some lower back, knee and ankle injuries so it's important to ensure that if you are considering using one, seek medical advice from your health provider regarding (and precautions for) standing if you:

- have a pre-existing musculoskeletal problem
- have a pre-existing circulatory condition; or are
- pregnant

If trialling a sit/stand workstation, it is especially important that you listen to your body and gradually build up time in standing. For predominantly desk based work, it is suggested to commence with short durations of standing e.g. 10 minutes, and gradually increase duration as endurance allows.

Managing privacy/security of documents on monitors and noise when you are speaking on the phone in a standing position is also important, as is taking extra care when unpacking, setting up and re-adjusting table top style units (where required). Always read the manufacturers' instructions and seek assistance from at least one other person prior to moving and handling table top styles.

Medical conditions and sit/stand workstations

In some instances, a sit/stand workstation may be prescribed by a medical practitioner as a means to alleviate symptoms of a medical condition. In these instances, you should consult with your manager/supervisor. Your local RRTWC may also ensure that appropriate equipment is acquired and that [reasonable adjustment](#) and/or a rehabilitation and return-to-work program is considered and implemented to support your needs. Be sure that you read and complete the [Sit/Stand Safe Operating Procedure and Agreement](#) and adhere to the prescribed times for standing/sitting from your medical practitioner.

Further information/resources

For more information on injury management and contacts:

<https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/health-and-wellbeing/workplaces/contacts>

For reasonable adjustments department procedure:

<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/reasonable-adjustments-procedure>

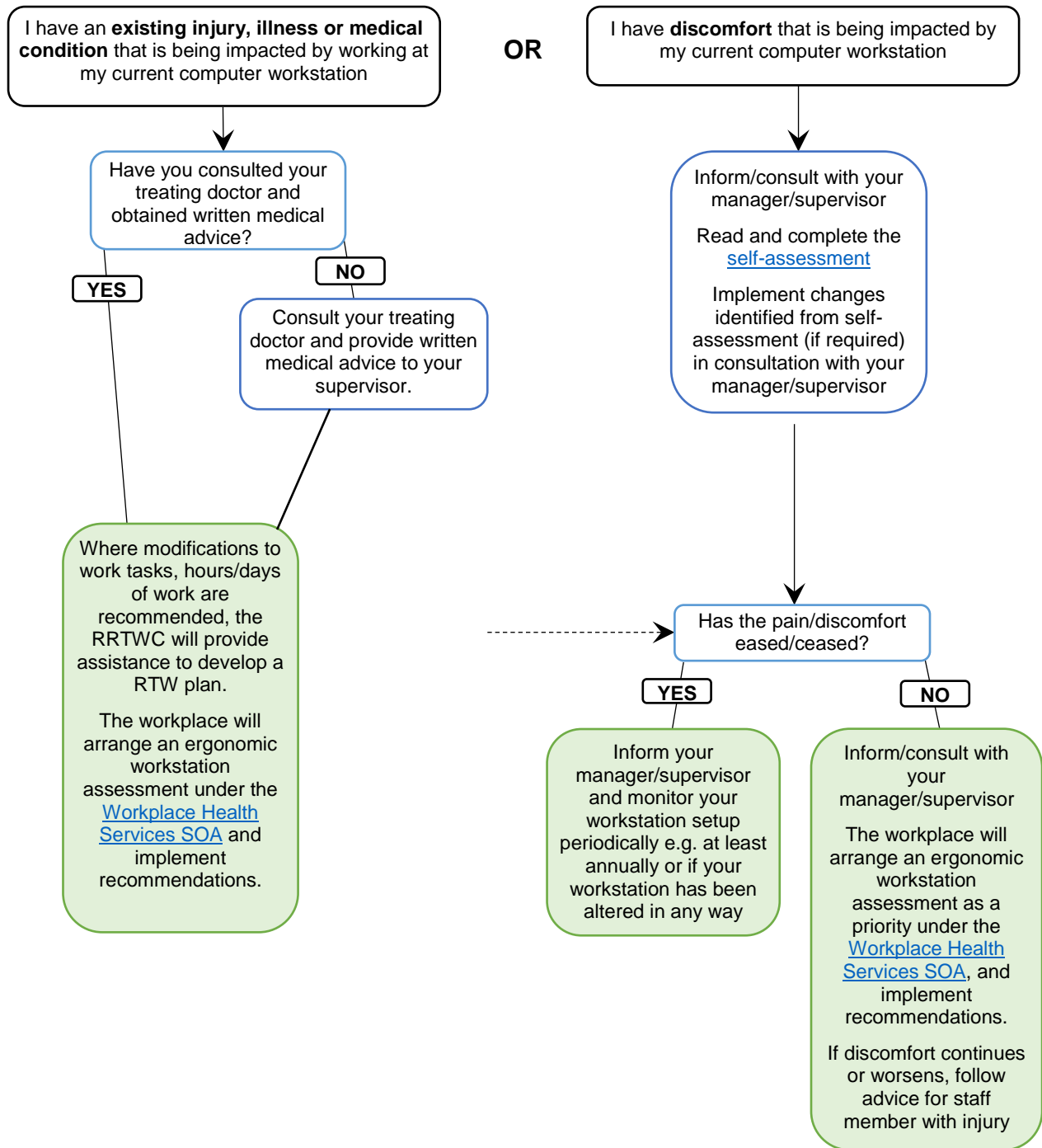


For advice on using laptops safely and computer tablets on the move:

<https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/laptop-use.pdf>

<https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/ergonomics-guide-tablet.pdf>

Workstation Ergonomics Flowchart



*RRTWC – Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator

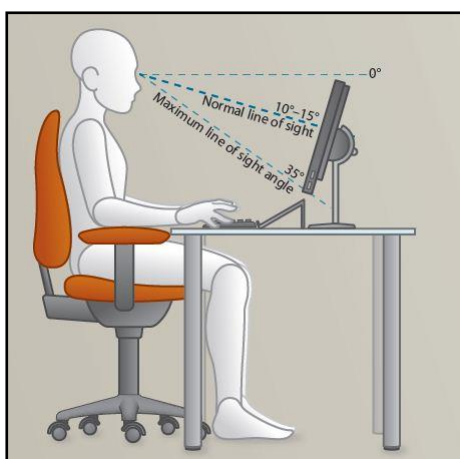
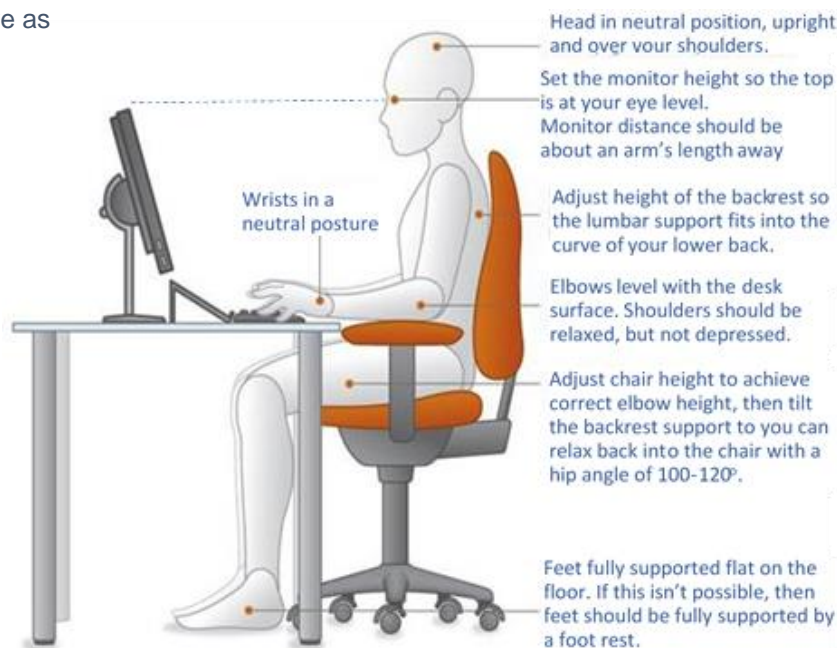
Check your workstation set-up

Setting up your workstation properly encourages good posture and minimises risk of discomfort and injury.

Adjust your chair to achieve comfortable working posture as shown (right).

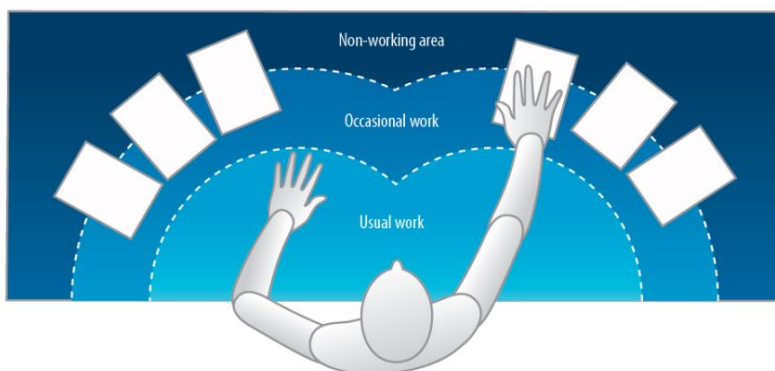
Elements include:

- Chair height
- Back rest
- Lumbar support
- Arm rests
- Seat pan/depth
- Stable base



Adjust your monitor to achieve a comfortable posture. This can be achieved through:

- Appropriate distance - consider your vision, font size and screen resolution.
- Height and Location – monitor directly in front with top of monitor at eye level.



Organise your desk/work surface as illustrated above.

- Keep frequently used items close to you and within easy reach.
- Take opportunities to change posture e.g. stand to access items that are in the non-working area.