

Covid19 - Working From Home (workstation setup)

How to work from home

Covid-19 has forced many organisations including Rhondda Cynon Taf to utilise working from home (WFH) in order for services to continue. For some service areas, working from home will be familiar territory and they are the ones that will find it easier to adapt to instructing workers to work from home. For others, working from home will be a completely new concept and they may struggle, certainly in the immediate period, to adapt.

Whether working on site or working from home, employers still have a duty of care to ensure risks to their workers are properly managed. Below are some tips aimed to help individuals to temporarily adapt to a remote working situation during these challenging times.

Ergonomic arrangements

Due to the escalated government measures globally, the requirements to self-isolate or work from home were accelerated and a lot of organisations will not have been prepared to set their workers up to work remotely.

Organisations that were not prepared for remote working, may find that workers may not have access to a desk or the appropriate workspace that they would be usually accustomed to at work.



So, how can I create a temporary workstation if I don't have the necessary equipment?

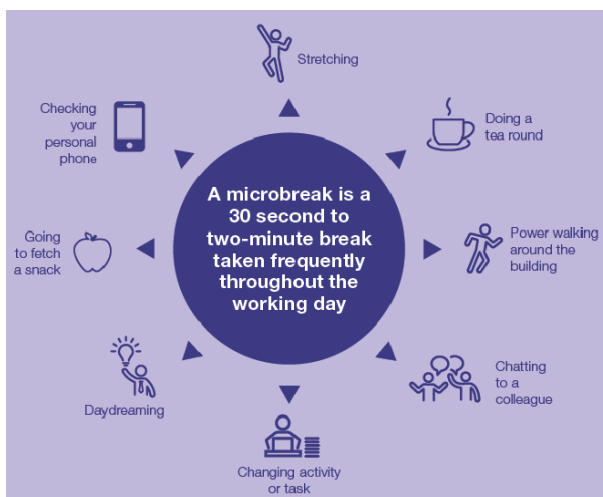
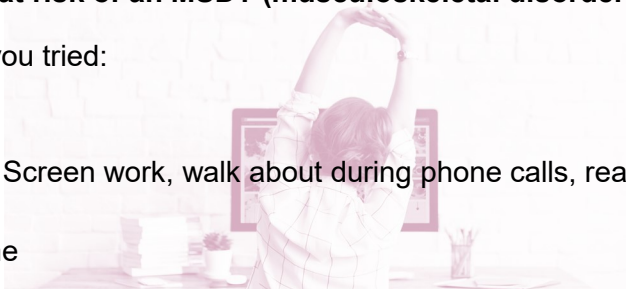
Should you not have access to sufficient equipment, you could try modifying your workstation using household equipment by:

- Using items such as books or boxes to raise a laptop to eye level
- Using items such as a box as a leg/foot support
- Using a kitchen worktop to create a standing workstation (away from water source/hot surface)
- Using a flat surface such as a dinner tray to sit a laptop, if there is no access to a table
- Sitting on a cushion to raise your seated position (if your table is too high, this will help you relax your shoulders and straighten your wrists).

How do I ensure that I am not putting myself at risk of an MSD? (musculoskeletal disorder)

Create a routine that suits your workload, have you tried:

- Doing work in short bites
- Taking regular breaks
- Alternating the type of work, you are doing – Screen work, walk about during phone calls, reading
- Stretching exercises
- Avoid eye fatigue by blinking from time to time



Micro Breaks - There are plenty of reasons to take micro breaks:

1. Give your brain a rest
2. Disrupts poor posture
3. Lowers risks of aches and pains
4. Avoids Mental and physical fatigue
5. Increases oxygen and blood circulation
6. Increases accuracy

If you have any concerns or require any further information, contact the Corporate Health and Safety Team:
healthandsafetyteam@rctcbc.gov.uk

Workstation Exercises

Recommendations to reduce aches and pains



Why Stretch?

No matter how well the workstation is designed, problems may arise where work organisation is poor or disrupted. Working at a computer often involves few changes in body position. This lack of movement can lead to muscular aches and pains.

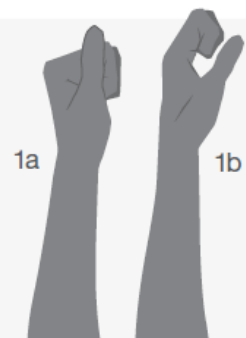
Recommendations to reduce aches and pains:

- Regularly vary work tasks, looking at organisation of the working day.
- Break up 'on-screen' activities with micro-breaks – tasks which involve movement, stretching and changes to body position.
- Try standing during some tasks and moving away from the workstation, for short periods, where possible.

Stretches for Wrist, Hand and Forearm

1.

Make a fist; ensuring thumb is straight, not tucked under fingers (1a). Slide fingertips up palm, tips of fingers moving towards base of fingers, until stretch is felt (1b). Hold for slow count of 10. Repeat 3 – 5 times.



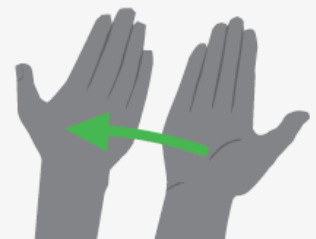
2.

With hand open and facing down, move wrist from side to side, until stretch is felt at each extreme. Hold each for slow count of 10. Repeat 3 – 5 times.



3.

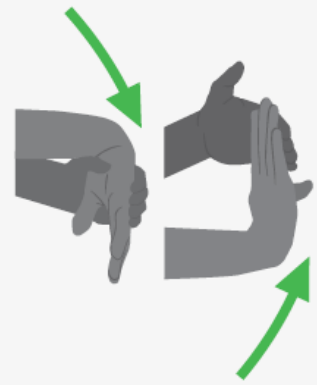
With elbow held close in to side of body, slowly rotate palm upwards and then downwards until stretch is felt at each extreme. Hold each for slow count of 10. Repeat 3 – 5 times.



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4.

Holding upper part of hand with other hand, slowly bend wrist down and then upwards until stretch is felt at each extreme. Hold each for slow count of 10. Repeat 3 – 5 times.



5.

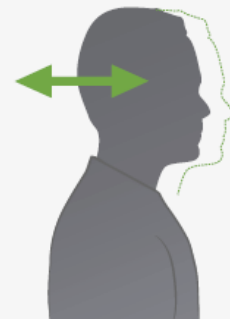
Sitting with elbows out and palms together, slowly rotate palms down until stretch is felt. Hold for slow count of 10. Repeat 3 – 5 times.



Stretches for Neck and Shoulders

1.

Sit or stand upright. Without lifting chin, glide head straight back until a stretch is felt. Hold for slow count of 10. Repeat 3 – 5 times.



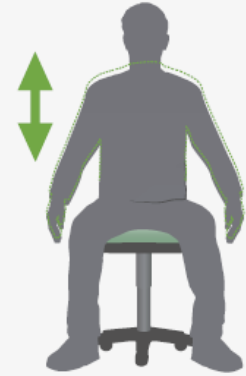
2.

Drop head slowly to one side, taking ear towards shoulder until stretch is felt. Hold for slow count of 10. Repeat 3 – 5 times to each side.



3.

Raise shoulders towards ears until slight tension felt across tops of shoulders. Hold for slow count of 10.
Release and repeat 3 – 5 times.



4.

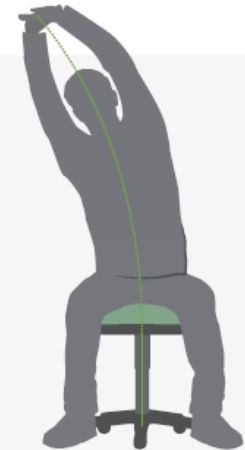
Sitting with back supported, slowly roll shoulders up and backwards in circular motion. Repeat 10 times.



Stretches for Back

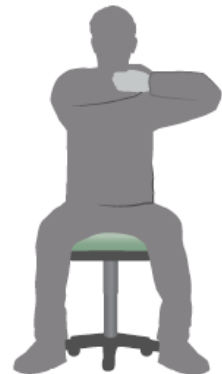
1.

Interlace fingers and lift arms above head, keeping elbows straight. Pressing arms back, slowly stretch to one side. Hold for slow count of 10.
Repeat 3 – 5 times to each side.



2.

Hold right arm with left hand just above elbow. Gently push elbow towards left shoulder until stretch is felt. Hold for slow count of 10.
Repeat 3 – 5 times to each side.



3.

Interlace fingers and lift arms above head. Slowly lean backwards until stretch is felt. Hold for slow count of 10. Repeat 3 – 5 times.



Stretches for Leg and Ankle

1.

Slowly lift one leg, straightening knee. Hold for slow count of 10. Repeat 3 – 5 times with each leg.



2.

Lift ankle clear of floor. Alternately flex and extend ankle in a pumping action. Repeat 10 times with each ankle.

