

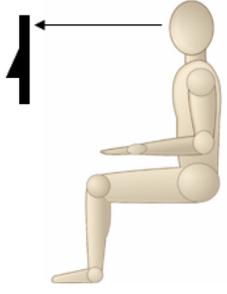
Remote Learning Ergonomics Guide for Children

There is optimism for 2021 as we can see a faint light at the end of a long and unfamiliar tunnel. As adults, many of us are working from home, some of us in makeshift workstations doing our best to be comfortable. We cannot forget that our children are also in similar situations, as teachers are doing an admirable job converting the curriculum to digital learning.

With virtual classrooms, online assignments and other activities, our children are just as susceptible to discomfort as we are. We are impressed with how resilient our children have become in these changing times. That being said, it still is a tough situation for them and creating a comfortable and inviting learning environment will provide them with some sense of comfort as we work towards being back in the classroom.

Workspace Considerations	Resources
<p>Conventional ergonomics suggests that you maintain neutral angles in various parts of your body as you sit at your workstation. Creating a comfortable space for your child is an important consideration for their online learning. While we are all competing for space with many people learning at home, here are some tips to ensure you create that space for your child.</p>	
<p>Children are active and fidgety and are not built to sit still for long periods. Their work area should allow for movement and provide a space (however small) to allow your children to move throughout the day and ease the strain of sitting.</p>	<p>healthy computing for kids</p>
<p>If possible provide various options for sitting while in virtual classrooms. Lying on the floor, a bean bag chair, or pacing around the room are good alternatives to sitting. Variety is the key to ensuring fatigue and discomfort are kept at bay.</p>	
<p>Ensure adequate lighting in their workspace. Open windows, turn on room or area lights to ensure your child is not causing any undue strain on their eyes. This should be matched by adjusting the brightness and contrast on their computer/laptop to match the lighting in the room.</p>	<p>flux night shift</p> <p>guide to preventing visual strain</p>
<p>Be careful not to have the room or screen too bright. There are many free apps that allow you to check the lighting levels which should be between 300-500lux. Although not 100 percent accurate, they can provide you with some idea of the lighting levels in your child's workspace.</p>	
<p>Providing enough light for the workspace may introduce glare on your child's screen. Ensure any source of light is not being reflected off the screen. Sitting parallel to windows, adjusting the amount light with blinds, or not sitting directly under a source of light are some suggestions.</p>	
Chairs	Resources

<p>Chair needs for children are the same as adults. Having your child sitting in a chair that is too big for them may lead to poor sitting postures. If you are looking to purchase a chair for your child. Here are some suggestions.</p>	
<p>Find a chair with a smaller seat. Many chair brands have adult chairs but with smaller seat and may be more appropriate for smaller children.</p>	
<p>If you are looking for a chair suitable for children, look for second hand office furniture stores that offer chairs with smaller seats, children furniture stores and other furniture supply stores.</p>	
<p>If your child is sitting in an office chair that is too big, make it a bit more comfortable by added a small cushion to sit on and/or roll a towel up and have them lean against it to provide them with some back support. This is also may work for those that may have to sit in a kitchen chair. For younger learners, make it a game to see if they can sit and hold the towel/cushion in that position for 20 minutes.</p>	<p>Ergonomic Videos</p>
<p>Your child may need to raise their chair so they can type comfortably, it's likely their feet will be off the ground. If this is the case they may require a footrest for support. A footrest can be made of a small recycling box, shipping box or other sturdy object.</p>	
<p>Computers and Laptops</p>	
<p>Resources</p>	
<p>Many children are using laptops or equivalent while learning remotely. Their small size can be advantageous for younger learners as they may not need to reach to type on an adult keyboard or reach too far to mouse. This is great for short term use however things have changed with long periods of learning at home. The monitor being small, children are often seen slouching over to see the screen and they are often reaching up on top of the desk surface to type and mouse.</p>	
<p>Consider a separate monitor to allow for a more upright posture when working.</p>	<p>ergo considerations - Cornell</p>
<p>Standard mice may be too big for your child. Consider a travel mouse or something smaller to allow for neutral wrist postures. Now is the time to teach your child how to mouse properly to avoid wrist discomfort. Using the whole arm to mouse not just the wrist is an important skill to learn. It might take time to master but will save some future discomfort. Consider an external keyboard and mouse. Many laptops have the required USB ports to accommodate these devices. Some keyboards and mice can be connected via Bluetooth as well.</p>	

<p>Place the top of the monitor at eye level to ensure a neutral neck posture</p> <p>The monitor should be located approximately an arm’s length away from your child. This may differ slightly depending on your child’s visual requirements and screen size</p> <p>If an external monitor is not an option, place the laptop on some books or a laptop stand to achieve the desired position and still use an external keyboard and mouse</p>	
<p>If you thinking about purchasing an external keyboard, try to ensure they are appropriately sized. You might be able to purchase a keyboard without the numeric pad, reducing the amount of reaching to the right. If your child needs the numeric pad, some keyboard have them located on the left.</p>	
<p>As best you can, the keyboard and mouse position should be just below resting elbow height. This allows for a relaxed shoulder posture and helps to maintain a neutral wrist posture when typing and mousing. You might need to raise your child’s chair to accomplish this. If you raise the chair, their feet may be off the floor. A footrest is needed and just about anything can be used such as a box to ensure they are resting their feet on a flat surface. The monitor may also need to be raised so the top of the screen is at eye level if the chair is raised.</p>	<p>ergo human cornell</p>
<p>Workstations</p>	<p>Resources</p>
<p>We may have a dedicated work space at our homes but our children may not. Providing your child with a workstation that fits their physical needs could assist in putting them in a comfortable posture while online learning.</p>	
<p>A workstation or desk can really be defined as anything. A simple table top with some adjustable legs can be a cheaper alternative then purchasing a traditional desk. This is a more flexible option as the legs can be adjusted as they grow. The table top can be placed at resting elbow height for an excellent mousing and typing position, and the laptop or monitor can be placed at the desired height, using books or reams of paper.</p> <p>Note: Ensure the workstation is large enough to account for various activities. Writing, science experiments, crafting and other activities your child may be involved in should be considered.</p>	<p>home office checklist</p> <p>Free e-learning for parents and teens eOfficeErgo: Ergonomics eLearning</p>
<p>Using headphones especially noise cancelling with a good microphone will improve focus and minimize any potential interference from others in the household. It is important that you mention to your children that headphone volume should be set to reasonable levels as to not damage hearing.</p>	

<p>You may also want to create a space that are free from distractions. If your child’s desk is in their room, removing smartphones, toys and other potential distractions will assist in concentration. Scrolling through their phone during virtual lessons may result in a flexed neck posture and could contribute to discomfort and missed homework!</p>	
<p>Movement</p>	<p>Resources</p>
<p>Working from home and learning from home may not ideal for some of us. Ensuring that we all get enough movement in our days is difficult especially with all the virtual activities scheduled. Review the following video with your family to stress the importance of movement throughout your day.</p>	
<p>Changing postures frequently during virtual activities (e.g. alternate stand/sit, stretch, change position of chair etc.)</p>	<p>stretch for kids</p>
<p>Ensure your child is active in between virtual activities and not sitting for prolonged periods while on their devices. Movement is imperative to fight off fatigue and discomfort.</p>	<p>Ergonomic Videos</p>
<p>Take advantage of breaks in between virtual activities to go for a walk, run or play. Movement is key</p>	<p>7 Tips to stay healthy while working from home</p> <p>healthy living and physical activity</p>
<p>Psychosocial Health</p>	<p>Resources</p>
<p>The stress of remote learning is affecting us all in different ways. There is a strong link between stress and the development of physical discomfort. Stress-induced physiological changes in a person's body can lead to among other issues, an increase in muscle tension. This could cause an increase in pressure on and around joints, tendons, ligaments, nerves, and may cause excessive use of force during certain activities and movements.</p>	
<p>Taking frequent breaks will help your child decompress physically and mentally. Going for walks, stretching, and doing some exercises is a great way to relax the body after long periods of sitting.</p>	
<p>Socializing is a challenge while working remotely, but allowing screen time to chat with classmates and friends will help with your child’s mental health.</p>	
<p>Modelling behaviour has a great impact on your child’s mental health and subsequent stressors that may lead to discomfort among other things. Staying calm, practicing good work habits, and being a good role model may help your child with the stress and anxiety of the pandemic.</p>	<p>12 fun and easy activities for children to support mental health</p>

Resources

WSPS has provided a number of free resources to assist with workstation set up and design, reducing the impact of psychosocial factors and mental health and other Covid related issues. Visit <https://covid19.wsps.ca/resources>

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