1. **Work Posture**

Workplace furniture should be adjustable to comfortably accommodate a range of body sizes and shapes. Adjustments should be made to office furniture to bring your posture as close as achievable to the ideal shown below (Figure 1):

- The feet are supported on the floor, or a footrest
- The thighs are supported by the chair seat with no pressure caused by the front edge of the seat under the thighs
- The upper body is upright, with the lumbar curve of the back firmly supported by the backrest
- The shoulders are relaxed, down and back
- The elbows are close to the body and upper arms are vertical
- The forearms are approximately horizontal and the wrists are aligned with the forearms when the fingers are on the keyboard
- The head is upright or inclined slightly forward with no neck strain.

![Figure 1](image-url)
2. **Workstation Measurements**

- Work surface should be between 680mm and 720mm from the floor
- Work surface should have minimum dimensions of 1500mm x 900mm
- Thickness of the work surface should be between 25mm and 33mm
- Adequate leg space - minimum depth of 550mm and width of 800mm
- A foot rest may be necessary for fixed-height workstations
- Sharp edges, corners, protrusions or rough surfaces are avoided

3. **Work Surface Layout**

Items used frequently should be within easy reach from the normal working position. Items used less frequently may be placed at full arm extension from the seated working position, or even require a slight stretch. Refer to figure 2.

*Exercise:* Make up a list of your common tasks and the equipment and materials you use to complete them, then arrange the desk and work area so that the things you have listed are easy to reach.

Other work layout considerations include:

- items, such as folders or manuals, used regularly need to be placed at a comfortable height
- it's good to stand up to access filing cabinets, shelves and bookcases

4. **Workstation Equipment**

1. **4.1. Chairs**

Important aspects of chair design include:

- Stability (5 star base, and freely moving castors on carpet, or glides on a hard floor surface)
- Adjustability: it should be easy to adjust the chair from a seated position for height of seat base and back rest, and tilt of seat base and back rest
- Grip: woven fabric upholstery is preferred, except where vinyl is necessary for hygiene reasons (e.g. laboratories, kitchens, etc.)
Guideline
Office-based Workstations

You can check your chair is correctly adjusted by ensuring:
• your posture is upright or slightly leaned back
• the lumbar region of the back is firmly supported by the back rest
• a minimum 2-finger gap is present between back of knee and chair
• feet are flat on the ground or footrest

4.2. Screen Placement

• The distance from the user to the screen should ideally be 600mm or more (arm’s length away). This is dependent on individual characteristics such as short-sightedness.
• The top edge of the screen should be at about eye height
• The centre of the computer screen should be no higher than 400mm above the work surface
• Glare and reflections on the screen should be eliminated
• Screen contrast and brightness should be adjusted to avoid eyestrain

4.3. Printers

Printers should generally not occupy valuable workspace on desk tops. Issues to be considered include:
• the routing of cabling between the printer and the computer
• space occupied by the printer
• unobstructed access to the printer
• noise from some types of printers
• storage space for printer paper

4.4. Mouse

The mouse should be placed directly beside the end of the keyboard on your preferred side. The mouse pad should be placed as close as possible to the keyboard to avoid over-reaching.

To minimise fatigue when using the mouse:
• Learn to use it with either hand so that you can swap between right and left – the buttons can be reversed in ‘Settings’
• Avoid holding onto the mouse when not in use

4.5. Document Holders

Document holders promote good posture because they prevent repeated twisting and turning. There are three types of document holders that can be purchased dependent upon individual preferences. Refer to figure 3.
Document holders should be positioned to promote comfortable head and eye movement. For example, if you spend the majority of your time typing looking at a document, the document holder needs to be placed directly in front of you (behind the keyboard) and the computer screen slightly to one side.

4.6. **Footrests**

Footrests are sometimes necessary for fixed-height workstations where operators’ feet cannot comfortably reach the floor. It should be non-slip and large enough (350-400mm wide) with a slight angle (approximately 10 degrees).

4.7. **Cables**

Cable leads from computers, telephones and other work equipment should be tied up to avoid creating a tripping hazard. ITS will assist with this.

4.8. **Reading and Writing Tasks**

For reading or writing tasks, desk height should be just above elbow height to provide appropriate support of the upper body, arms and elbows.
5. **Other Aspects of Workstation/Office Set-up**

5.1. **Lighting**

Good lighting helps prevent eye strain. Glare or reflection present on your computer screen can be prevented by:
- Adjusting the artificial lighting;
- Controlling the natural lighting; or
- Repositioning the screen in relation to light sources, e.g. the screen could be re-set at right angle to incoming natural light.

Information on many aspects of lighting, including recommended illuminance levels, for various types of office tasks and environments can be found in Australian Standard AS1680.2.2 Interior lighting – Office and screen-based tasks.

5.2. **Control of Noise**

Generally, noise levels in office areas are well below those known to pose a risk to hearing. However, noise can become an issue if it interferes with communication, annoys or distracts people and affects work tasks.

Solutions to controlling noise include:
- Eliminating the source
- Sound proofing
- Repositioning

5.3. **Work Temperatures**

A comfortable temperature range for sedentary work is between 18-25°C.

General suggestions for improving thermal comfort include:
- Regulate air conditioning for temperature and humidity
- Avoid locating workstations directly in front of, or below, air conditioning outlets
- Control direct sunlight
- Minimise draughts and thermal differences

6. **Work/Job Design**

Whilst the correct workstation design and set-up plays an important role in how comfortable you are at work, so does Work/Job Design.

Job Design is the process of deciding on the tasks and responsibilities to be included in a particular job. Good job design aims to balance the technical and organisational requirements of the job as well as the social, personal and physical needs of the employee.

From a health and safety viewpoint, the three most important aspects of good job design for office-based work are (1) variety, (2) autonomy and (3) feedback on work performance. Having a variety of tasks to perform adds to feelings of achievement and self-worth. In jobs where computers are
used intensively, additional tasks unrelated to the type of work should be added wherever possible to increase variety and allow time for muscles to recover.

6.1. **Tips**

- organise your workday to include a variety of screen- and non-screen-based work
- vary tasks and try to include some that require physical activity
- reduce stress by planning ahead and setting realistic expectations for what you can accomplish during the workday
- organise your workload to help even out busy and slow times
- organise equipment, supplies and furniture in the most efficient arrangement for daily tasks
- acknowledge ideas and accomplishments of co-workers on a regular basis
- develop stress reduction and relaxation techniques that work for you at the office and at home

7. **Exercises**

Your body must stay active to stay healthy and to maintain full function. There are many health benefits to taking part in regular exercise. Obtain specialist advice before starting on an exercise program.

Suggested examples of exercises include:

7.1. **Eye Exercises**

- blinking
- looking at distant objects

7.2. **Back Exercises**

- walking
- swimming
- cycling

7.3. **Neck Stretches**

Gently lower ear toward shoulder and hold for 10 seconds. Slowly roll chin to chest and up toward other shoulder. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat several times. Do not extend your neck backward.

7.4. **Shoulder Rolls**

Circle both shoulders forward several times, then backward. Repeat three to five times.