

# PURCHASING ERGONOMIC EQUIPMENT

Here are our top tips for purchasing ergonomic equipment for working at home, to help avoid any (potentially) costly mistakes!

## Laptop / monitor riser

When sitting at the correct height (shoulders relaxed, elbows bent to 90 degrees, forearms parallel with the worksurface and wrists straight) the top of your screen(s) should be approximately level with your eye height.

If you use an external monitor, riser blocks are available; stackable ones are ideal so that you can achieve the desired height, or consider a fully adjustable monitor arm. For laptops, height adjustable stands are best; many laptop stands are also angle adjustable and have a rubber framework to protect your laptop. If you regularly move your work area (e.g. to alternate from sitting to standing), consider a lightweight/portable laptop stand. Always plug in an external keyboard and mouse when using a laptop stand; to avoid reaching up with your hands/arms.

## Chair

No one type of office chair is necessarily the best, but there are some things that are important to look for in a good ergonomic office chair, including:

- an adjustable seat height
- a backrest that is adjustable in height and (preferably) in angle
- lower back (lumbar) support, ideally height and depth adjustable
- a depth-adjustable (sliding) seat pan, particularly if you are short or tall
- if the chair has armrests, height adjustable ones are better than fixed (and they should ideally be removable).
- a breathable fabric or mesh is better than leather/plastic
- ability to swivel and have a five-star base for stability
- castors that are suitable for the floor the chair is being used on, e.g. carpet or hard floor.



## Keyboard

A keyboard that is too big or small can force the hands, arms and shoulders into uncomfortable positions, resulting in unnecessary strain and eventual injuries. Consider a compact/mini keyboard, allowing you to position the mouse closer to you, to minimise stretching and reaching. Left-handed keyboards are available (with the number pad on the left side of the QWERTY keys) or use a separate number pad.

## Mouse

Choose a mouse that fits your hand; it should be the right shape and size to support the natural curve of your hand and allow a neutral wrist position. The mouse should have buttons that neither cramp nor spread out the fingers too much. Options include a standard mouse, trackball mouse, vertical mouse and roller bar/trackpad mouse. For further tips on mouse selection, see 'Computer mouse selection and use' - System Concepts ([system-concepts.com](http://system-concepts.com)).

## Desk

A suitable desk is key. Consider the following.

- The desk height should be 72-74cm.
- The desk depth (front to back) should be a minimum of 60cm to accommodate your computer equipment and allow a comfortable screen viewing distance. Ideally 80cm depth if you are using external monitor(s).
- Desk length should ideally be at least 100cm to provide sufficient space for your computer equipment, but can be larger to suit your requirements.
- Make sure the worksurface of desk is not too thick (7cm maximum) so that you can sit at the recommended height with adequate legroom.
- If the desk has drawers/storage, make sure your chair fits under the desk and your legroom is not compromised.

## Always remember...

Even when using some or all of the equipment mentioned above, taking regular breaks from long periods of sitting and static postures is key to maintaining comfort.