



Irish Society of  
Chartered  
Physiotherapists  
The Voice of Physiotherapy in Ireland

# A Guide to Working Well and Safely in your Home Office Space



**The Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (ISCP) is the sole professional organisation representing chartered physiotherapists in Ireland. The ISCP Clinical Interest Group in Occupational Health and Ergonomics (CPOHE) has prepared this guidance to assist you with working well and safely at home, and setting up your home office space.**

Moving regularly and continuing to be physically active is key to working well at home. The benefits of regular physical activity and movement are numerous and include:

- good overall health
- promotion of circulation
- improved memory and concentration
- elevated mood and reduced stress
- healthier joints and muscles

## **Tips to Move Regularly to Work Well from Home**

- Stand up and move around at regular intervals (minimum once an hour and more often if possible)
- If possible, take a walk at lunchtime (in line with Government recommendations)
- During virtual meetings, you may wish to turn off the video and stand up and move around
- If possible, stand up and move around when you are on calls
- Climb the stairs often if you have one
- Continue to engage in regular physical activity



Features of a Suitable Workspace	Benefits
Quiet, low-traffic area with adequate heat and ventilation	To minimise distractions
Well-lit with minimal glare (adjust blinds/ curtains and use a table lamp where required)	For eye comfort
Clutter free	Provides space to move freely
Visually check that sockets, plugs and cords are in good condition	To ensure there is no damage, fraying or overloading

Choose a Suitable Work Surface	Benefits
Ideally work at a desk or table of adequate size	To accommodate your essential work items
Space underneath to allow access for your legs	Legs are free to move and stretch under the desk/table

Monitor and Screen Use	Benefits
If available, use a desktop monitor or link your laptop to a desktop monitor if working for longer periods (Photo 1, see below)	Desktop monitor is often larger than a laptop screen and may allow for more comfortable viewing
Position screen directly in front of you, at approximately arm's length away, with the top of the top 1/3 of the screen at approximately eye level (Photo 2, see below)	Allows you to face forward while you work and promotes comfortable viewing
If working on a laptop, use a laptop riser or stable temporary stand, and use an external keyboard and mouse if you do so	Raises the screen for comfortable viewing



Photo 1



Photo 2

Keyboard and Mouse	Benefits
<p>Place the keyboard directly in front of you within comfortable reach, and place the mouse close to the keyboard. Aim to have your wrists in a relaxed neutral position while typing (Photo 3, see below)</p>	<p>Upper arms are relaxed and by your side, and wrists are comfortable when typing</p>
Adjust your Chair	Benefits
<p>If possible, adjust the chair height so that your upper arms are relaxed by your side, and your wrists are in a neutral position when your hands are on the keyboard (Photo 3, see below)</p>	<p>Arms are relaxed by your side, and hands can move easily across the keyboard</p>
<p>Position your chair as close as comfortable to your work surface. Lower or remove the armrests if they prevent you getting close to the desk</p>	<p>Allows you to keep your back in contact with the backrest of the chair while you work</p>
<p>If possible, adjust the backrest height and tilt for your comfort, and try to sit with your back against the backrest</p>	<p>Back is supported by the backrest of the chair while you work</p>
<p>If using a standard non-adjustable chair, choose one that provides good thigh and back support. You may need to use cushions behind and underneath you (Photo 4, see below)</p>	<p>To raise yourself up and provide additional back support for comfortable working</p>
<p>If your feet are no longer on the floor, a low stable stool, step or box may provide support (Photo 5, see below)</p>	<p>Feet are supported</p>



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5

Additional Tips	Benefits
Structure your work routine, and don't forget to build in time for regular breaks	To help you keep your focus and work productively and comfortably
Work with your manager / set your own realistic daily goals	To support your mental wellbeing, help pace your work, and keep your focus
If available, use a headset for video call meetings or phone calls	Allows upper limbs to relax and move during calls
Stay connected with colleagues, family and friends	To reduce any sense of isolation
Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day	To keep hydrated, reduce fatigue, and promote concentration
Increase your screen font size if necessary, or use a larger screen if available	To reduce eye strain
Aim to look 20 metres into the distance every 20 minutes for 20 seconds	To give your eyes a break from screen use
Limit screen time in the evening/leisure time	To promote restful sleep

Key Features if Purchasing a Desk Chair	Benefits
A five-star base (Photo 5)	To provide stability
A height adjustable seat	To adjust the seat height for your comfort
A height adjustable backrest or lumbar support	To adjust the backrest height to support your back
Tilt adjustable backrest	Allows you to move, change position, and keep your back supported, while seated
Height adjustable armrests or no armrests	So that you can bring the chair close to the work surface

# Working Well & Safely at Home Checklist

## Suitability of Workspace

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Quiet, low-traffic area                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Well-lit with minimal glare                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Clutter free with adequate space to move about | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No trip hazards or electrical safety issues    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Suitability of Work Surface

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Suitable desk or table of sufficient size to accommodate work items | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Space underneath to allow access for your legs                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Monitor and Screen

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| Desktop monitor or laptop riser/stand in use                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Screen positioned in front  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Screen positioned at approximately arm's length from you            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Top 1/3 of the display screen positioned at approximately eye level | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Keyboard and Mouse

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| External keyboard and mouse in use  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Keyboard positioned centrally and within comfortable reach                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mouse within comfortable reach of keyboard                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Working position allows relaxed shoulders, with upper arms close to your side | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Adjusting your Chair

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Chair height adjusted so your hands move easily across the keyboard                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Feet in contact with the floor or a suitable support                               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chair as close as comfortable to the work surface, armrests not restricting access | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cushion in use to support your low back if required for comfort                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |