

LAPTOPS

Laptops are the most essential mobile working device for many people. Combining power and portability they are the benchmark work device.

However, because laptops have linked keyboard and screen this can lead to poor posture. If you use a laptop without a riser – i.e. on your lap or directly on a table / desk, the low screen height is likely to lead to poor neck posture. And if you raise the screen to an optimal height, the keyboard becomes unusable.

This short advice sheet gives you tips on how to manage the risk of strain injury from working using laptops.

Very simply, aim to do as many of the Do's and as few of the Don'ts as you can, whatever the situation you find yourself mobile working in!

DO

Use a laptop stand, an external input device and an external keyboard if you plan to work for longer than 30 minutes at a desk / table.

Choose a riser that can be adjusted to lift the top of your laptop screen to approximately the same height as your eyes level.

Use a laptop wedge stand if a full stand is impractical. Aim for one that tilts the keyboard to around 12 degrees – you can measure the angle with your smartphone!

If your seat is adjustable, make changes so that it is more comfortable:

Remember **EEL** -

Eyes – raise screen so top is in line with your eyes.

Elbows – sit so that your elbows are at 90deg when typing.

Legs – make sure your legs are supported and that your feet are supported either by a footrest or on the floor.

If you are unable to avoid using it on your lap try to raise your laptop using books, or a briefcase etc. Just make sure that whatever you use is stable and does not block cooling vents.

DO

Try using hotkeys and shortcuts – work out which ones you could use the most and try to learn one per day.

Take a rest break (2 to 5 mins) at least every 20 minutes if you are using your laptop directly on a table or desk – without a riser or external keyboard.

Remember to take eye-rest breaks even when set up optimally – 20-20-20 – every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

Keep your screen clean and avoid working while there is glare (strong reflections) on the screen.

If your laptop has automatic light level adjustment, make sure your device's automatic brightness adjustment is not switched off.

Remember to BLINK! We just don't blink as much when we use devices and screens, this can be a factor leading to digital eyestrain.

Check your posture regularly – try to make posture checks a habit – don't slump your shoulders, keep your neck straight.

DO

Listen to your body – don't get worried about every little ache and pain, but try to pick up on discomfort that you can ease by adjusting to a better, more neutral, working posture.

Stop-Drop-Flop – take micro pauses e.g. at the end of an email or text, stop what you are doing, stretch and let your shoulders drop, and let your hands flop by your sides.

Sit and stand – try to vary your posture – as long as you can vary between sitting and standing postures which are reasonable.

DON'T

Don't work with your laptop directly on your lap

Don't work for long periods (20mins) with your laptop directly on a desk / table (without a full stand or a wedge stand)



MORE INFORMATION?

If you, or people working for you, use mobile devices (laptops, tablets, smartphones etc) as a significant part of work, please visit our website. There you can find more detailed guidance to download, and links to our mobile working risk management systems.

Follow our social media pages for tips, product ideas and the latest mobile working news.

