

Office ergonomics: Your how-to guide

By Mayo Clinic

A comfortable work space can help you feel your best. Give your sitting work area a makeover with this visual guide to office ergonomics.

If you sit behind a desk for hours at a time, you're not doomed to a career of neck and back pain or sore wrists and fingers. Proper office ergonomics — including correct chair height, adequate equipment spacing and good desk posture — can help you and your joints stay comfortable at work.

Ready to give your work space a makeover? Get started making your sitting workstation comfortable with this visual guide to sitting workstation ergonomics.

Chair

Choose a chair that supports your spinal curves. Adjust the height of your chair so that your feet rest flat on the floor or on a footrest and your thighs are parallel to the floor. Adjust armrests so your arms gently rest on them with your shoulders relaxed.

Key objects

Keep key objects — such as your telephone, stapler or printed materials — close to your body to minimize reaching. Stand up to reach anything that can't be comfortably reached while sitting.

Keyboard and mouse

Place your mouse within easy reach and on the same surface as your keyboard. While typing or using your mouse, keep your wrists straight, your upper arms close to your body, and your hands at or slightly below the level of your elbows. Use keyboard shortcuts to reduce extended mouse use. If possible, adjust the sensitivity of the mouse so you can use a light touch to operate it. Alternate the hand you use to operate the mouse by moving the mouse to the other side of your keyboard.

Telephone

If you frequently talk on the phone and type or write at the same time, place your phone on speaker or use a

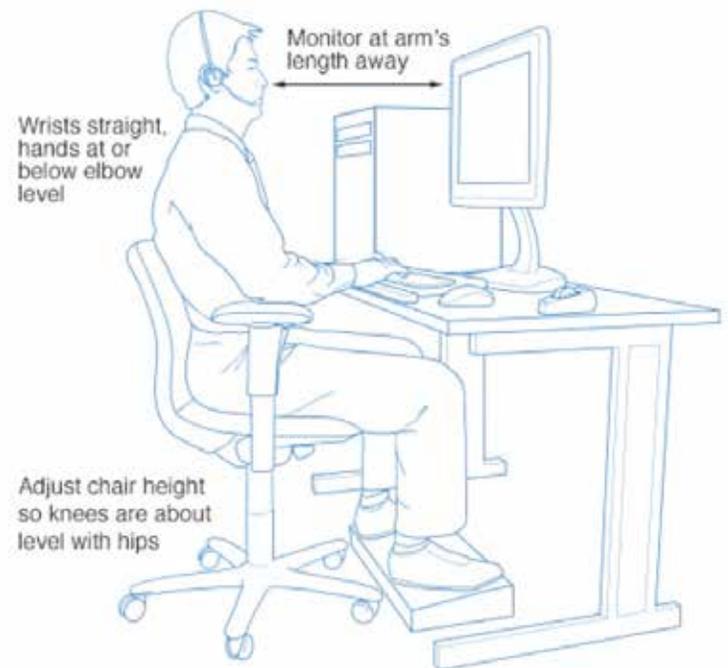
headset rather than cradling the phone between your head and neck.

Footrest

If your chair is too high for you to rest your feet flat on the floor — or the height of your desk requires you to raise the height of your chair — use a footrest. If a footrest is not available, try using a small stool or a stack of sturdy books instead.

Desk

Under the desk, make sure there's clearance for your knees, thighs and feet. If the desk is too low and can't be adjusted, place sturdy boards or blocks under the desk legs. If the desk is too high and can't be adjusted, raise your chair. Use a footrest to support your feet as needed. If your desk has a hard edge, pad the edge or use a wrist rest. Don't store items under your desk.



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Monitor

Place the monitor directly in front of you, about an arm's length away. The top of the screen should be at or slightly below eye level. The monitor should be directly behind your keyboard. If you wear bifocals, lower the monitor



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an additional 1 to 2 inches for more comfortable viewing. Place your monitor so that the brightest light source is to the side.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/office-ergonomics/art-20046169>

Restrictions on gatherings

Alberta has restricted gatherings to protect Albertans' health and limit the spread of COVID-19.

A gathering is any event or assembling that brings people together in person, in a single room or single space, indoors or outdoors, at the same time. At this time, gathering restrictions do not apply to any place of business still permitted to operate

Gathering restrictions

No gathering of more than 15 people is allowed in one indoor or outdoor location.

People gathered in groups of fewer than 15 people must maintain a distance of 2 metres from one another. Gatherings must occur in a space that allows for mandated physical distancing (at least 2 metres between attendees).

Examples of indoor and outdoor gatherings include

- weddings
- funerals
- religious services
- informal events
- conferences
- educational seminars and workshops
- group volunteering initiatives

All individuals found to be in violation of gathering restrictions are subject to a \$1,000 penalty.



Reducing risk in gatherings

Recommendations for mitigating risk in indoor and outdoor gatherings:

- Cancel, postpone, reschedule or explore virtual attendance options for attendees from demographic groups at greater risk of severe disease, such as people 60 years of age or older and individuals with chronic medical conditions
- Eliminate activities within gatherings that could promote disease transmission (e.g. singing, cheering, hand shaking, preparing food, sharing food or beverages, buffet-style meals)
- Contact Alberta Health Services Environmental Public Health before commencing any volunteer initiatives that involve preparing food or collecting donations. These types of activities are not recommended during this pandemic as they increase the likelihood of spread of COVID-19 in the community
- Exclude people who are sick with a fever or cough from attendance (even if symptoms appear to be mild or resemble a cold)
- Reduce the number of participants or change the venue to allow for physical distancing - *No gathering of more than 15 people is allowed*
- Stagger the time of arrivals and departures from gatherings
- Increase access to handwashing stations or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Increase the frequency of cleaning of surfaces that are touched often
- Promote personal protective practices (coughing and sneezing etiquette, hand hygiene)
- Exemptions
- Public transit – providers are obligated to ensure that the risk of transmission of infection between members of the public is prevented.
- Businesses – a business that is not otherwise restricted or ordered to close can have more than 15 people on site. Workers may work at a distance closer than 2 metres. However, risk mitigation strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 must be implemented and followed.
 - Shelters; temporary or transitional housing facilities; licenses residential addiction treatment housing facilities.



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- Letter of exemption to shelters and temporary or transitional housing facilities
- Letter of exemption to licensed residential addiction treatment service facilities
- Industrial work camp dining facilities - operators must implement practices to reduce the number of people together in one dining facility location at one time.
- Letter of exemption for industrial work camps
- Guidance for managers and operators of industrial work camps
- Enforcement

If you violate this public health order and proceed to hold or attend a gathering with more than 15 people, you may be subject to a \$1,000 fine.



Courts could also administer fines of up to \$100,000 for a first offence and up to \$500,000 for a subsequent offence for more serious violations.

If you are concerned someone is not following public health orders, you can:

- remind the person that not following public health orders is against the law and puts people at risk
- submit a complaint to AHS public health inspectors <https://ephisahs.microsoftcrmportals.com/create-case/>
- If you cannot submit online, you can also call 1-833-415-9179 to submit a complaint by leaving a message when prompted. Please only submit a complaint once. Do not submit online and by phone.

<https://www.alberta.ca/restrictions-on-gatherings.aspx>

COVID-19 public health orders are now enforceable by law

Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health issued orders under the Public Health Act to legally require:

- restrictions on gatherings and businesses
- returning international travellers to self-isolate for 14 days
- people exposed to COVID-19 to self-isolate for 14 days

- people experiencing symptoms to self-isolate for a minimum 10 days or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer. The most current information on symptoms can be found at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16997.aspx#sign>
- limited access to all nursing homes, designated supportive living and long-term care facilities, seniors lodges and residential addiction treatment facilities to essential visitors

For the most current list of restrictions, please refer to <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>



Wearing Masks

Wearing a facial covering/non-medical mask in the community has not been proven to protect the person wearing it and is not a substitute for physical distancing and hand washing. However, it can be an additional measure you can take to protect others around you, even if you have no symptoms. It can be useful for short periods of time, when physical distancing is not possible in public settings such as when grocery shopping or using public transit.



Strict hygiene and public health measures, including frequent hand washing and physical (social) distancing, will reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus.

Homemade masks may include those that are:

- made of cloth e.g., cotton
- with pockets to insert other masks or filters
- to be worn over N95 respirators (in an effort to reuse respirators)

Medical masks (N95, surgical or procedure masks):

- must be kept for health care workers and people providing direct care to COVID-19 patients

Non-medical masks (cloth or homemade):

- should only be used in addition to other protective steps
- are not proven to protect the person wearing it, but may help protect others



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- cover your mouth and nose to prevent respiratory droplets from contaminating other people or surfaces
- must be worn and taken on/off properly as the outside can become contaminated

Health Canada has provided important information on optimizing the use of masks and respirators during the COVID-19 outbreak.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/medical-devices/masks-respirators-covid19.html>

Renters and Landlords

New protections are in place for residential and mobile homes site tenants facing financial hardship due to COVID-19:

- Tenants cannot be evicted for non-payment of rent and/or utilities before May 1, 2020.
- Rents on residential properties or mobile home sites will not increase while Alberta's State of Public Health Emergency remains in effect.
- Late fees cannot be applied to late rent payments until June 30 and cannot be collected retroactively for this time.
- Landlords and tenants need to work together to develop payment plans while COVID-19 is being managed.
- Landlords can still file applications and receive orders for possession if the reason for the eviction is unrelated to rent and/or utility payments, or if a tenant refused to negotiate or comply with a payment plan.



closed to the public. Psychosocial, along with other peer and community supports, are currently available through the toll-free caregiver advisor line at 1-877-453-5088 and online at caregiversalberta.ca for all caregivers, including those caring for someone with COVID-19 or in self-isolation.

Medical concerns or questions about COVID-19 or how best to care for someone with COVID-19, are best directed to Alberta Health Services' Health Link at 811.

Caregivers Alberta Support

Online Peer Support: In response to the evolving COVID-19 situation they have added new ONLINE Caregiver Support Community groups happening each Monday and Thursday!

Caregiver Advisor: Need one-on-one support? The Caregiver Advisor can connect you to the resources you need, offer personalized support and is there to listen when you just need to talk. You can connect to the Caregiver Advisor by:

Phone: 780-453-5088 | 1-877-453-5088 (toll-free)
 Email: ladams@caregiversalberta.ca



Watch Past Online Workshops: You can watch past online workshops on the Caregivers Alberta YouTube channel at any time. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMTCXdhjFMXGTs-FSUFqwkQ>

Caregivers Alberta Facebook: Follow them on Facebook for daily updates, articles, and resources! You can also join the Caregiver Community Facebook group to connect with caregivers from all across the province.

Caregivers Alberta

Caregivers Alberta are there to support caregivers through this difficult and uncertain time. They recognize that as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve that there can be heightened feelings of stress, anxiety, and isolation. Caregivers Alberta is still open and will continue to offer support to ALL Albertans through our Caregiver Advisor and online programming. However, they are not available for in-person visits as the Jerry Forbes Centre is



Information taken from <http://www.caregiversalberta.ca/covid-19-resources/>

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