

The logo for NIFCO, featuring the letters 'NIFCO' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter 'I' is stylized with a white diagonal bar through it. The background of the top half of the page consists of several thick, parallel diagonal stripes in shades of orange and grey, creating a modern, geometric aesthetic.

NIFCO

HOME WORKING DURING COVID-19



This document is intended to give general advice and guidance on maintaining a comfortable working environment and keeping safe and well when working from home

It is not an exhaustive guide, but will provide you with information to allow you to set up at home in order to work comfortably.

If you have any specific questions or concerns regarding working from home, please contact your line Manager who will deal with your enquiry in the strictest of confidence.

We will be re-issuing online DSE assessments to all staff who are working from home to complete.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government is asking everyone to stay at home where they possibly can.

Where you have been identified as able to work from home, here are some guidelines to help you.

Check for unexpected hazards:

Offices and other workplaces are usually set up to ensure work can be carried out there safely. At home, with family and others around, things may not be quite so straightforward. Make a mental note of possible hazards - trailing laptop wires etc. – and try to remove or reduce these risks as much as possible.

If you have a work-related accident at home, please contact your line manager who will report it following the usual incident reporting systems.

Setting up your 'workstation':

Your living room may have become your 'office space' and we understand it won't always be easy to arrange a workstation at home under these conditions. Here are a few tips to help you make your new workspace comfortable and to allow you to work safely:

Before turning your equipment on, quickly check plugs, leads and outer covers are undamaged and there are no burn marks or stains which might suggest overheating.

Use the Diagram below as guidance for how to align, set up and use your computer / laptop / tablet - you may not be able to set things up exactly as described, but if you follow the key points, you will achieve the most comfortable position possible for your situation.

When using a laptop, place it on a firm surface (or a docking station if you have one) rather than a sofa edge or pillow. Try to use a full-sized keyboard and mouse if possible and angle the screen to minimise any reflections.

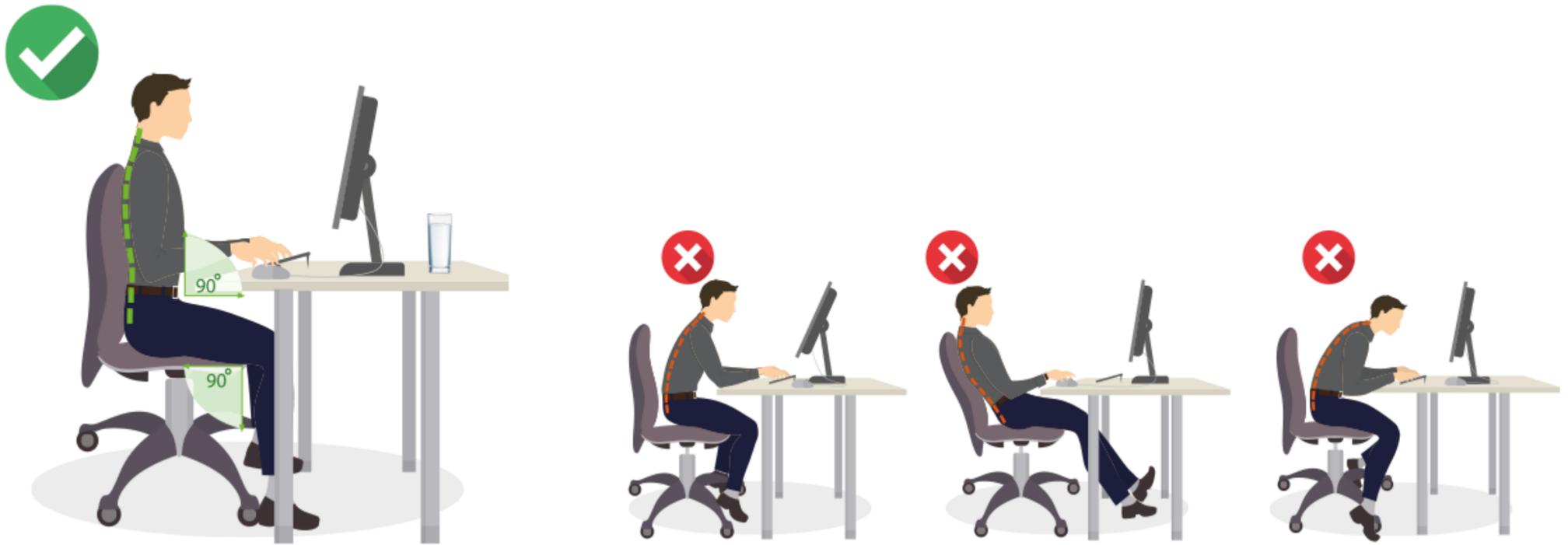
If you need to raise the height of your laptop, you can use suitable sized books if you do not have access to a laptop riser or stand.

Increase the size of the text / font on your laptop screen to reduce eye strain.

If you are experiencing **significant issues** in relation to your DSE set up, please contact your line Manager.

Correct Set up for a Desktop or Laptop using a dedicated separate screen

If using a Laptop with a separate screen, always try to use a separate dedicated mouse and keyboard



If you require any equipment such as mouse / keyboard, please raise a helpdesk request in the normal way.

Create a Daily Routine:

Where possible **have a clear start and end time** otherwise you may feel like you are working 24/7 which may lead to increased stress. When you need to be more agile with your work hours avoid 'work creep.' Put your laptop away when not working and have structured time for family , especially when the family is also at home

Keep to your existing routine - get up on time, get dressed, eat breakfast, anything you would usually do. Keep boundaries between your work and home life

Don't undertake big chores such as cooking or DIY during the workday. Schedule these chores outside of your working hours or in the time you would normally spend commuting. Small bits of housework such as loading the dishwasher will help you to vary your posture but be careful not to lose sight of your work tasks and focus

If possible, **choose a specific room or environment as your workspace** and stick to this for most of your work. Sometimes you may find that working from a different work area enables you to vary your posture. This is only advised if you have the space and can keep work focused!

Remember to schedule a time for breaks. Little and often is ideal – break before the onset of discomfort to keep your body protected from posture related problems. Use your phone, smart watch or calendar to set reminders for frequent breaks

Wind down at the end of your workday. Taking time to 'decompress' is instrumental for stress relief. Reading, meditating, exercise? Do what it takes to work for you

Move often:

Fidget, stretch, stand up to take phone calls, move around, sit to stand 10 times every hour. Movement is the key to reducing postural aches and pains. If your day allows, leave the house and go outdoors. Exercise naturally boosts endorphins, which increases happiness, enjoyment, and interest levels - all of which are important for mental and physical health and productivity

Online Activity resources are available at the below online resources:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio>

<https://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYIRfn6rYQ>

(Joe Wicks exercise channel)

Look after your body - eat and drink healthily:

Although you have full access to the kitchen, try to avoid high sugary snacks. You have more time to prepare a proper healthy meal or snack and make sure you drink enough fluids. Getting up to prepare a hot drink is also a good moment for exercise.

Be aware of impact on your Mental Wellbeing:

Stay social –regular communications over telephone or networking sites such as MS Teams, Zoom, Skype helps to alleviate feelings of isolation. Use of video conferencing really supports human interactivity and should be encouraged. Managers should be encouraged to set up regular team communications, ideally at a set time each day, to encourage personal interaction and support

BUT don't spend all your time checking your phone, watching, reading or listening to news for updates. That just generates anxiety and worry. Try to limit yourself to seeking updates at planned times, once or twice a day

Stay on top of any difficult feelings. It is quite normal to feel anxious during a crisis when your life has been turned upside down. Focus on any positive outcomes and talk to trusted family and friends about your feelings

Allow yourself breaks and make sure to give yourself 'rewards' after working hard

Take time to unwind – do whatever helps you to 'chill out' and relax If you find you have more time than usual, use it for things you find meaningful. Maybe read a book or watch a film you wanted to get into

Support your colleagues – in particular, consider calling your extrovert colleagues more often as they may feel particularly lonely

Have some background noise - Studies have shown that listening to soft, classical music or having the radio on whilst you work can help improve focus

Use available online resources (see list in Appendix of reputable websites)

Seek help when needed

If you are struggling with either your physical or mental health ensure you reach out for professional help. You may wish to discuss this with your line manager, as they can often help and refer you to appropriate support. The sooner you ask for support the easier it is to help resolve your health issue.

Links for Mental Health Support:

Anxiety UK

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/blog/health-and-other-forms-of-anxiety-andcoronavirus>

NHS Mental Health Apps

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/mental-health>

Mind

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/>

BABCP COVID-19 Anxiety Blog

<http://letstalkaboutcbt.libsyn.com/coping-withanxiety-about-coronavirus>

World Health Organisation:

https://www.who.int/docs/defaultsource/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf?sfvrsn=6d3578af_8

OCD UK

<https://www.ocduk.org/ocd-and-coronavirus-top-tips/>

Blurt it out

<https://www.blurtitout.org/2017/05/23/a-z-self-care>

Every Mind Matters

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

Living Life to the Full

<https://littf.com/>

Calm Harm

<https://calmharm.co.uk/>