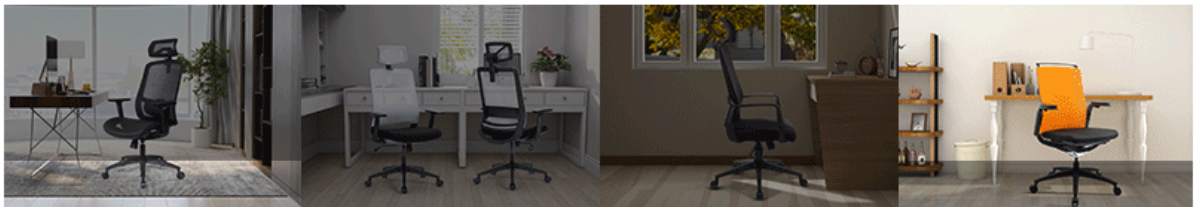


# How to improve your posture when working

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The way you work can have a dramatic effect on your posture, resulting in back pain and long-term issues. Improving your posture at work could make a huge difference.

Whether you're working from the office or working from home, your posture is important. It is far too easy for poor posture to become second nature due to bad habits – such as how you sit in your office chair, carry your bag or drive – which can result in back and neck pain, as well as serious spinal damage.

Taking steps to improve your posture, support your back and avoid potential long-term damage is important when it comes to working in an office environment. The chances are you spend a lot of time at your desk, which means you need to understand exactly how you should be working.

To help ensure you're sitting comfortably and improving those bad habits that can lead to back pain, we've put together an essential guide on how to improve your posture at work.

## Make sure you have a suitable chair

Not having the right chair is the first and biggest mistake people often make. Old, unsupportive and broken chairs can all cause problems beyond not being very comfortable.

In a professional office environment, it's often the case that you inherit a chair that has been well-used when you start at the company. You should ensure that the adjustments all work as they should, there is still adequate padding on the seat and that it is comfortable. If there is a problem with your chair, you should bring it to the attention of your company as they are required to provide you with adequate equipment.

When it comes to working from home, too many people work from the sofa, their bed or a dining chair – none of which are ideal. Office chairs are designed with office working in mind, meaning they will always be the better choice. They allow for adjustments to be made, support good posture and ensure your back is being looked after. Whether you have a desk or are working at the kitchen table, you should ensure you invest in an ergonomic office chair.

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## Set up your chair and desk correctly

Your workspace should be set up to enable you to practice neutral posture. This is when you allow your spine to sit in its natural alignment position, which is straight from head to toe. Practising this will help you avoid slouching or hunching over, helping to reduce muscle tension and pain.

To ensure your posture is correct, you need to make sure your desk and chair are both set up correctly. This should enable you to maintain a neutral posture without having to think about it. Ultimately, your workspace set up should follow these rules:



Your chair height should allow you to use your keyboard with your wrists and forearms straight and level with the floor.

Your monitor should be at eye-level and an arm's length away.

Your keyboard should be straight in front of you.

Your mouse should be kept close so you can easily use it without needing to reach.

## Pay attention to the warning signs

Poor posture will usually give you a warning sign that it is starting to affect you physically. You might experience back pain, tense muscles, or an aching neck throughout your workday, which can all be caused by your posture as you work.

You should also pay attention to when you experience pain or twinges, as this can help you figure out what might help. It may be that your back starts to hurt at a certain time of day, which could mean you've been sitting down for too long, or you find that you are uncomfortable while performing a certain task, which could be due to how you sit while doing that task.

Once you start to pay attention and adjust your posture and position accordingly, you may find that the pain and discomfort become a thing of the past. If not and you are still getting paid despite your desk and chair being set up correctly, it may be that you need to try a new chair that gives you better support.

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