



Display Screen Equipment Code of Practice

Reviews and Revisions

Date	Reason	Reviewer	Next review date	Approved by
10/01/2017	Code of Practice updated	J Hall	Feb 2019	E Pritchard
28/02/2019	Review and Logo change	J Hall	Feb 2020	E Pritchard
27/06/2019	DSE Flow Chart added	J Hall	Feb 2021	E Pritchard
19/07/2019	Line Manager responsibilities added	J Hall	July 2021	E Pritchard
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Introduction

It is the responsibility of Northumbria University to provide a safe and healthy working environment and to ensure that users of Display Screen Equipment (DSE) have been properly assessed and the risks to their health and safety controlled in accordance with current health and safety legislation, the Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 (as amended 2002).

It has long been recognised that incorrectly set up workstations can have a detrimental effect on health. Visual fatigue, shoulder and back pain, carpal tunnel conditions and other types of musculoskeletal problems can result from bad posture, inappropriate seating and long periods working at the keyboard. Stress may result from such factors as unfavourable environmental conditions and task planning.

See Health and Safety Executive guidelines here - Working with VDU's

The E-learning DSE Training Module

- In order to ensure that such health effects are minimised, **each employee /user shall complete** the [E-learning DSE Training Module \(awareness level\)](#) .This training informs the user of Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (WRULD's), correct workstation setup and best working practices.
- After this training, users will be able to properly adjust their workstation to suit their own physiology.

Responsibilities:

Faculty Pro Vice Chancellors and Service Directors

- Ensure all persons in your charge have completed the E-Learning DSE Mandatory Training Module.
- Support the DSE Users/ DSE Assessors/ Safety team in carrying out their duties.
- Implement appropriate recommendations made by the H&S Manager and Occupational Health Advisor.
- Ensure furniture and equipment provided for users is of a suitable and sufficient standard.
- Authorise the purchase / distribution of desk equipment such as laptop stands and other computer peripherals required for touchdown and meeting room users as appropriate.
- Authorise the use of specialist advice/ equipment providers (Posturite).

Line Managers

- Shall request Occupational Health referrals for users under their charge as required
- Assist users in the DSE self-assessment process and the correct set up of their workstation.
- Shall approve and be directly involved in the purchase of specialist equipment for users under their charge (Following assessment by the Central Health & Safety Team).
- It is the responsibility of the faculty or service department to fund and organise the purchase of equipment via Posturite using the COUPA ordering system. (A copy of any quotation received from Posturite should be attached to the purchase requisition).



Users

- Shall complete the E-learning DSE Training Module which forms part of the mandatory training agreed with HR, and thereafter every three years as refresher training.
- After this training, users will be able to properly adjust their workstation to suit their own physiology.
- If the workstation cannot be properly adjusted to suit the individual, then users must carry out a DSE Self-Assessment in order to properly identify specific issues. The user's supervisor or line manager should be involved in this process.
- E-mail a copy of the self-assessment to the Central Health and Safety Team.
- Repeat self-assessments as required e.g. if there are any significant changes to work equipment or environment, or if advised to do so by the by a member of the Central Safety Team CRHealthandSafety@northumbria.ac.uk.
- Report any health problems which may be related to computer work to their line manager.

University H&S Team

- Advising user line managers to request referrals to Occupational Health (through Human Resources) for individuals where appropriate.
- Assist users in the DSE self-assessment process and the correct set up of their workstation.
- Carry out face to face assessment with users where necessary.
- Ensure all users know where to seek help if they have difficulties with an issue which relates to DSE health and safety.
- Follow up self-assessments to help resolve any problems identified.
- Recommend the use of proprietary items such as footrests, wrist rests, document holders etc.
- Arrange for external assessment to be carried out through Posturite (our equipment suppliers).
- If such equipment is required, Posturite will carry out an in-depth face to face assessment with the user and recommend the necessary equipment. Arrangements can then be made for the purchase and fitting of such equipment.

Laptop Computers & Portable Devices

- Laptops pose a postural risk to users when used for long periods: (as a rule of thumb - more than 2 hours per day).
- Ideally the keyboard and screen should be separate, with the top third of the screen at eye level, this can be achieved through:
 - Using a docking station (preferred) with screen in an upright position.
 - Using with a laptop stand, keyboard and mouse when a separate monitor is not available.
- All laptops and their accessories should be as light as possible. It is recommended that a backpack type carrier be considered if a laptop is to be carried frequently.
- Avoid branded laptop cases for security.



Hot Desking

- Where hot desking takes place, all workstations in that particular area are identically designed so that a single DSE assessment will prove sufficient for all locations (though seating must be correctly adjusted to suit each individual). See hot desking safety advice [here](#).

Occupational Health Referral

- An Occupational Health Referral is required PRIOR to an assessment being undertaken by the Central H&S Team.
- It is the users line manager who normally contacts occupational health for a referral.
- A referral may be required for users exhibiting signs and symptoms of work-related upper limb disorder, or returning to work after an illness or injury.
- If it is found that elements of the workstation and equipment cannot be adjusted to suit the user, or health or medical conditions require consideration, then the [DSE Self-Assessment Form](#) should be completed in conjunction with the user's line manager.
- After the DSE Self-Assessment and the "Discomfort Questionnaire" have been completed, the H&S Manager shall decide whether the provision of specialist user specific equipment or further assessment is required.

Eye Examination and Testing

- The University will provide the means for all employees who are identified as "users", to have an eye examination and test when requested. Re-testing is usually every two years, exceptions would be on the optician's advice.
- A link to the Eye Examination Page can be found [here](#).
- The University will only have to pay for spectacles if the test shows users need special corrective lenses that are prescribed for the distance the screen is viewed at. If an ordinary prescription is suitable for your DSE work, then the University/employer does not have to pay for your spectacles.
- Contact HR or your Safety Team for further information.

Rest Breaks

- Breaking up long spells of DSE work helps to prevent fatigue, eyestrain, upper limb disorders and backache. Most employees within the University will have some control over their own working arrangements and will be able to organise their work to take this into account.
- The best way to break up work is to alternate work with more active tasks, such as filing, photocopying etc. Where this is not possible, more formal breaks may be necessary.
- Frequent micro breaks (*2 to 3 minutes*) every 30 to 40 minutes are preferable to longer breaks taken every couple of hours.

Home working

- Where University employees are contracted to work from home, the full requirements of the DSE Regulations in terms of provision of equipment and suitable set up must be implemented.



- In these cases, although not coming under the DSE Regulations, the employee should ensure that their work area is set up in accordance with good DSE working practices.

Temporary Working from Home: Covid-19 (March 2020)

- During the Covid-19 pandemic, as a temporary measure, certain staff may have to work from home for a period of weeks or months: A guidance note has been published with practical reminders to follow to ensure that you achieve the best workstation setup possible. The note can be found in [Appendix 6](#) below.

Specialist Consideration:

Pregnant Workers

- Although scientific studies have not discovered any link amongst new and expectant mothers and DSE use, the layout and working arrangements should be routinely discussed with their supervisor or line manager over this period.
- This can be carried out at the same time as the University Pregnancy Risk Assessment Process. Special consideration should be given to achieving a comfortable seating position and an increase in the frequency and duration of rest breaks.

Post Graduate Students

- Post graduate students who have an employment contract with the University will be covered by this policy, in the same way as other members of staff. They will be expected to complete the mandatory training and DSE self-assessment process.
- Post graduate students who are not employed by the University, are not covered by this policy, and the University are not obliged to provide them with free eyesight testing, glasses and training.
- However, the University does recognise it has a duty of care to them and every effort will be made to provide those students having difficulties with timely advice and information.
- Where the University provides a computer or workstation for a post graduate student, whether employed by the University or not, there is a duty of care to ensure this is suitable for the task.

Undergraduate Students

- Undergraduate students are not covered by the DSE Regulations and therefore not covered by this policy, however although it is less likely that an undergraduate student would be required to make sufficient concentrated use of DSE to be classed as a “user”, should a student report difficulties, every effort should be made to advise that student as necessary.



Appendix 1

DSE Portable Guidance (tablets, ipads and smartphones etc.)

Used correctly, smart phones, tablets and notepad devices should not pose any risks to health. The key to preventing hand, neck and eyestrain is to limit the use and duration.

The keypads are not designed for long periods of use or for work requiring information input, a correctly set up workstation or laptop is always the best option.

These smart devices are intended for occasional use as a notepad, as an aide-memoire or to record against a checklist or pro-forma. Suitable arrangements and facilities must therefore be available for downloading and uploading information to a standard workstation where it can be manipulated and used without risk.

Users tend to angle their head down or raise their arms. Holding either posture for any extended period of time runs the risk of developing neck and upper limb conditions.

Some basic advice:

- When interacting with the screen have the tablet flat or only slightly angled to ensure that your wrists are not in an awkward position.
- Use a light touch when interacting with the screen.
- Avoid glare on the screen.
- Keep the screen clean so that you can see the display.
- If you find yourself leaning forward to view the screen or to enlarge the image or text, try to place the tablet on a surface rather than holding it.
- If you need to use the keypad for prolonged periods, consider using a blue-tooth external keyboard.
- When reading from (as opposed to interacting with) the equipment, use a stand, or tilt the tablet so that the need to bend your head forward is minimised.
- Remember that movement is important. If you find yourself using the device for more than 10-20 minutes take a short break to stretch your hands, shoulders and neck. Relax your eyes by looking into the distance.

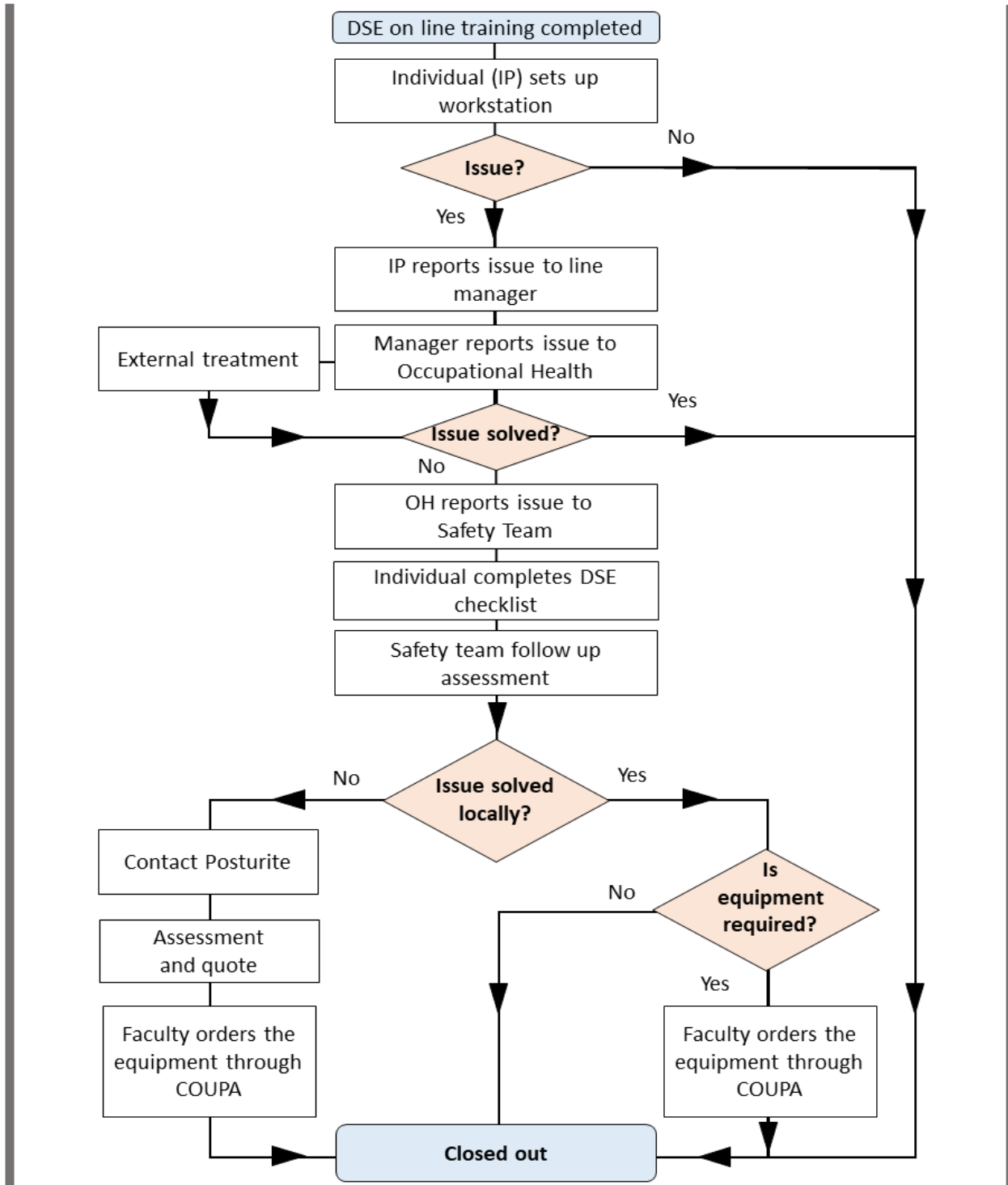
Remember – Never use your portable device when walking – many slips, trips and falls have resulted from this.

The University Central Health and Safety Team can be contacted for further information and advice on 0191 2274100.



Appendix 2

DSE Flow Chart



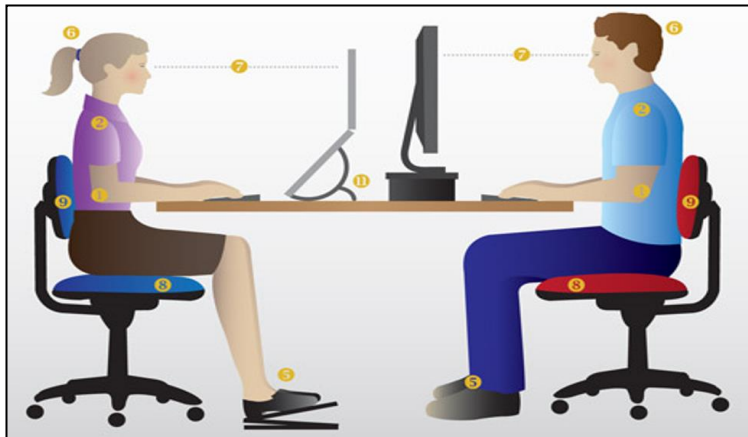


Appendix 3

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Self-Assessment					
To be completed by the individual and signed by the line manager					
Name		Faculty/Service/Room		Date:	
Job Title		How long have you been in this role?		Line Manager name:	
Working Hours		Assessor name		Action Completed	
Ref	Seating & Posture	Y / N	Comments / Actions		Y / N
1	Forearms approximately horizontal - adjust seat height to achieve this				
2	Shoulders relaxed and not hunched over, head upright				
3	Wrists and forearms are level				
4	Hips, knees, ankles at 90 degrees when seated				
5	Feet flat on the floor or on footrest				
6	Work chair fully adjustable /seat at correct height				
7	Eyes level with the top third of the screen				
8	Seat at correct height and supporting thighs				
9	Good back (lumbar) support				
10	Keyboard - adjustable detachable, legible				
11	Standalone laptop, ipad, tablet or laptop with stand, external keyboard & mouse				
12	Screen: stable image - adjustable to suit user				



Ref	Environmental Factors	Y / N	Comments / Actions	Y / N
a	Adequate lighting			
b	Adequate contrast, no glare or reflections			
c	Distracting noise minimised			
d	Leg room & clearances sufficient			
e	Window blinds adequate			
f	Software/programs appropriate to task			
g	Work surface spacious - no glare			



Line Manager	Signed	Date
For completion by H&S Team only		
Outstanding actions agreed with Occupational Health nurse and Safety Team		Y/N
Referral to Posturite:	Date:	

Discomfort Questionnaire - Optional

BODY PART	Severity 1-4 indicate left or right - L R	Frequency A, B, C	Comments	
Hands/ Wrists/ Fingers				
Elbows				
Shoulders				
Neck				
Back (upper/Lower)				
Legs/ Thighs /Calves				
Headache/ Eyestrain				
Other:				
	1 = mild 2 = moderate 3 = severe 4 = unbearable	A = seldom B = Often C = Always	Have you talked to your GP	
			What is the hardest part of your job?	
Any other comments				

Referral to Occupational Health	Date:	Referral to POSTURITE	Date:	Signed:
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Appendix 4



There's always time to put Safety First



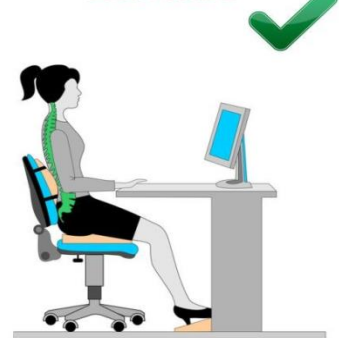
Hot Desking Safely

When using a hot desk, you are not expected to complete a full DSE assessment every time, but you do need to take the time to adjust your workstation to suit you, this will help in reducing any ergonomic risks to you and aid in your comfort. Wipes are provided to keep the keyboard, mouse and screen clean.

Watch your back

- Sit properly; use the seat functions to adjust height and to give the lower back support. Sit well back in the seat and try to keep a straight upright back posture.
- Keep upper arms in line with the upper body and lower arms horizontal to the floor when resting hands on the keyboard.
- Your screen height is very important, and laptops are not best designed for good posture as there is a tendency to be looking down at the screen. Use docking stations wherever possible so you can have your screen height correct for you. The top of the viewing screen should be approximately at your eye level when you are sitting correctly.
- Keep the underside of the desk clear so you can position legs and feet comfortably.
- Do not sit for long periods, stand up and walk around every 25-30 minutes or so.

Good Posture



Watch your neck & shoulders

- Try to keep head movement to a minimum, so position your screen so that you do not need to continually move your head to view it.
- Relax shoulders, do not hunch or lean forward.

Bad Posture



Watch your eyes

- Avoid glare from windows and lights reflecting onto your screen by tilting the screen or positioning it at right angles to natural light if possible. Window blinds should also be used when necessary.
- Look away from the screen occasionally, focus on objects at differing distances within the room for a few seconds on each and blink often!
- Take an eye test.

Watch your arms

- Do not stretch to reach keyboards, again laptops can be restrictive and so separate keyboards should be used if possible.
- Keep the keyboard in front and positioned such that there is room to rest wrists in front when not keying.
- Watch your hands, wrists and fingers.
- Position mouse close to you and in front so wrists are straight.
- Break up intensive and continuous keying or mousing tasks with short frequent breaks, a minute or so in every 10 is advisable and use this time to stretch fingers and then relax hands.

Remember these key points:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Elbows
Above the desk, at 90-110 degrees</p> <p>2 Shoulders
Relaxed as opposed to hunched</p> <p>3 Wrists
In line with forearms</p> <p>4 Hips, Knees, Ankles
At 90 degrees whilst seated</p> <p>5 Feet
Flat on the ground or footrest
For prolonged standing, consider a mat</p> <p>6 Head
Upright with ears aligned with shoulders</p> | <p>7 Eyes
Looking at the top third of the screen.
Consider the use of a laptop raiser with your laptop</p> <p>8 Seat length
Should be long enough to provide support beneath thighs</p> <p>9 Backrest
Angled at 90-110 degrees with adequate lumbar support in line with lower back</p> <p>10 Keyboard and Mouse
G and H of keyboard aligned with your nose. Mouse gripped loosely</p> <p>11 Laptop
Used with a riser, external keyboard and external mouse</p> |
|--|--|



This poster is for guidance purposes only and does not replace the training provided in the Guidance for the Safe Use of Display Screens provided. If you have any problems with the hot desk or adjusting it, please talk to your line manager.



Appendix 5



Assessment Referral	
Individual to be assessed Name: Email: Telephone Number: Address (where assessment is to take place):	Requestor / Contact / Report Return Name: Email: Telephone Number:
Working hours of user:	
Reason for request:	
On completing this form, please send direct to our Sales Support Team: appointments@posturite.co.uk Telephone: 0345 345 0010	

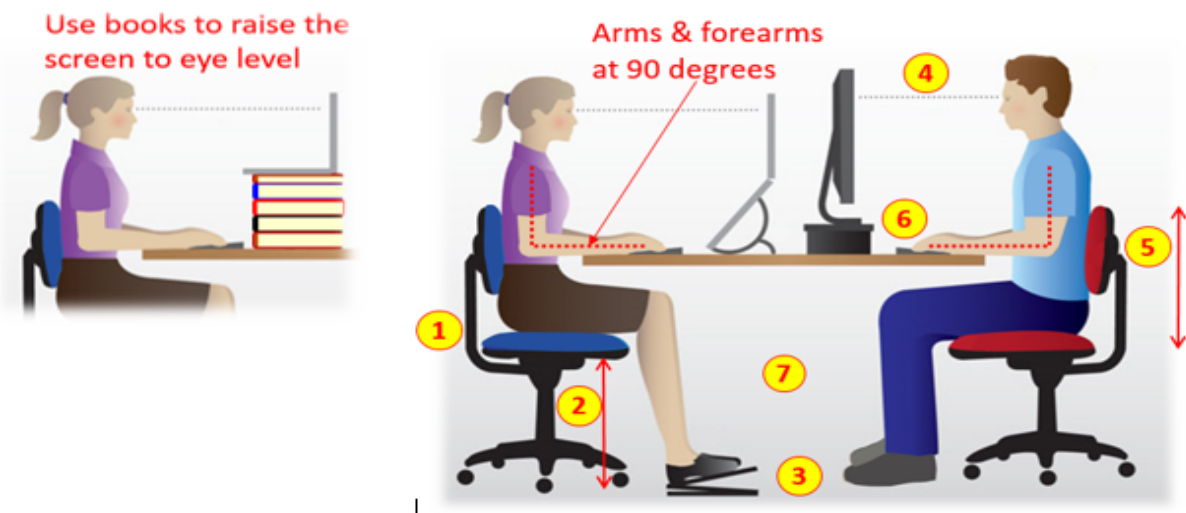


Appendix 6

Working From Home - Workstation Guidance

March 2020

During the Covid-19 pandemic, as a temporary measure, certain staff may have to work from home: Here are some practical reminders to follow to ensure that you achieve the best workstation setup possible.



Make space to work in:

You will need to have access to

- **A table** and a **sturdy chair***.
- A separate **keyboard / mouse**
- **PC or Laptop / iPad**
- **A laptop stand** - to raise the height of the screen: (a pile of books will work perfectly well instead).

If you already use a workstation desk with your PC or laptop at home, then all the better.

- Where possible, use an ergonomic chair* (adjustable height / back rest).
- Adequate **lighting and window blinds**, suitable contrast with no glare or reflections.
- Ensure that any trailing cables are positioned so as not to cause a tripping hazard.
- Check that your electrical equipment is in good condition. Don't overload sockets or daisy chain extension leads.

Setting up your workstation:

1. Sit in an upright posture, adjust the angle of the chair back **and don't hunch your shoulders**.
2. Adjust your **seat height** so that your wrists and forearms are level (hands floating 1/2" above the keyboard) *You may need to utilise cushions to achieve this*
3. Feet should be **flat on floor**, or a footrest obtained
4. Adjust **screen height or raise the laptop** so that your eyes are level with the top part of the screen.
5. Adjust the **chair back height** or use a cushion to support your back.
6. Your **keyboard** should be adjustable and detachable, have the **H** in line with your nose when typing.
7. No **clutter** on or under the desk, leaving sufficient leg room for you.



Online Training – Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

All staff should have completed the mandatory online DSE training (refreshed every 3 years). If you have not done so you should use the [link here](#) to the HR Training Portal.

Posture

Whilst at home it may seem easier to simply open the laptop and start working without making any adjustments, this can lead to poor posture, which can cause pain and discomfort over time. It is well worth taking a couple of minutes to set up your workstation correctly each time you sit down to work.

Try to Avoid

- Using phones or tablets for extended periods
- Sitting on unsupportive seating such as a sofa
- Static postures

Taking Breaks

Regardless of your set up, the best way to look after your musculoskeletal health is to take regular breaks and to move around as much as possible.

While at your workstation take regular **micro breaks** - 2 to 3 minutes every half hour or so. If you don't have a separate keyboard and mouse, you should break *every 15 minutes*.

- Reading paperwork/reports away from your workstation is one way of doing this.
- Stand up while you're phoning people.

The more makeshift your setup, the more important it is to move around and exercise.

Look After Your Eyes

We tend to blink up to 5 times less when staring at a PC or laptop screen; so follow the **20-20-20 rule** - every 20 minutes, take 20 seconds to look at an object 20 feet away - to change your focal length and exercise your eyes.

Keep in Regular Contact with Your Line Manager and Colleagues

Via phone, instant messaging, e-mail, Skype or Teams – so that conversations, worksheets, files, folders and updates can be shared as required.

When on-line meetings or conference calls are scheduled, one person should chair the meeting to ensure that each member has a chance to speak, and that the whole team understands any actions and what is required of them.

Keep Healthy

Remember to keep hydrated and eat, drink water and beverages regularly and keep to your normal meal times. Maintain a healthy nutritious diet. Inform your Line manager immediately if you feel unwell.



Set Sensible Working Times

Know your working patterns and your rest periods, so get used to clocking on and off. It can be all too easy to work long hours without realising it.

You are not required to be available 24/7 - so switch your PC, phone and emails off at the end of your “shift”.

Keep in Touch with Developments

With the University, Government and other Health agencies by checking the [Staff Portal](#) regularly.

Other Useful Links

The University’s health and safety pages can be found [here](#). For further advice please email CRHealthandSafety@northumbria.ac.uk

You can also find useful home working advice, guidance and exercises on the [Posturite Website](#).

UNN/H&S/GN/023