# Sit to Stand Workstations

## Why use a Sit to Stand Workstation?

Sit to Stand Workstations provide an opportunity to incorporate positional change into a working environment. They are most commonly used in situations where task rotation away from the computer is not possible, where there is a clinical need (medical diagnosis) requiring regular standing, or for those experiencing discomfort or pain from prolonged sitting. Sit to Stand workstations are not the 'sole solution' to any of the above concerns.

**If a Sit to Stand Workstation is in place, it should be used to complement other strategies for increasing movement, outlined in HSE-GUI-008f Activity Based Work Guideline.**

## Standing Hot Desk:

If several staff have expressed an interest in Sit to Stand Workstations, it may be helpful to consider the provision of a 'Standing Hot-Desk' which can be used by multiple people for short periods of time throughout the day.

Staff using the Standing Hot Desk are recommended to have read this guideline, in conjunction with the HSE-GUI-008c Standing Workstation Set Up Guideline, and are expected to understand how to safely use the apparatus. Each staff member using the hot desk will need to reposition the monitor, mouse and keyboard to meet their individual needs.

## Personal Request for Sit to Stand Workstation:

In circumstances where an employee requests a Sit to Stand Workstation on the basis of a personal (non-work related) injury, JCU requests that clinical reasoning be provided by a medical practitioner (General Practitioner or Specialist) prior to approving the purchase. Information that is required to support a clinical need includes:

- What is the clinical reasoning for the sit to stand desk, specific to the employee's musculoskeletal diagnosis;
- What additional recommendations and strategies are in place to promote self-management of the diagnosed condition?
- Doctors name and practice stamp.

The employee is to submit the clinical reasoning to the Injury Prevention & Management Advisor at rehab@jcu.edu.au who will review the information and provide an update to the employee and their line manager. Please note, like other ergonomic equipment, the purchase of Sit to Stand Workstations are to be organised and paid for by the employee's line manager and sourced through JCU's preferred providers.

If an employee requests a Sit to Stand Workstation due to discomfort from prolonged sitting. It is recommended that the employee first complete the HSE-GUI-008a Ergonomic Workstation Self-Assessment and look to implement strategies from the HSE-GUI-008f Activity Based Work Guideline, as an attempt to remedy the situation.

## Risks and Controls

Installation of a Sit to Stand Workstation brings with it a number of risks and hazards that should be considered, and control measures implemented.

Should an employee feel at risk when using a Sit to Stand Workstation they should immediately cease and advise their manager.

| Risk / Hazard | Control Measure |
|---|---|
| Poor standing posture leading to increased musculoskeletal discomfort. | The employee is responsible for being aware of their posture and should endeavour to stand tall with shoulders back, chest lifted, and weight evenly distributed between both lower limbs. |
| Prolonged standing position leading to increased musculoskeletal discomfort, lower limb oedema and varicose veins. | The employee is responsible for regularly alternating between sitting and standing every hour e.g. stand 15 minutes / sit 45 minutes, slowly increasing their tolerance to standing. |
| Discomfort or injury associated with prolonged standing in unsupportive footwear or high heels. | The employee is responsible for choosing an appropriate style of footwear i.e. avoid wearing high heels. |
| Body stressing associated with manual lifting / lowering mechanism of some workstations. | The employee is to adopt optimal body positioning whilst transferring the Sit to Stand Workstation between various working heights or use an electronically programed adjustable height workstation. |
| Visual / Audible distraction and lack of privacy for other employees seated near a Standing Workstation in an open plan office. | The manager is to consider best placement for the Sit to Stand Workstation to minimise disruption and maximise privacy for all employees. |
| Storage of anti-fatigue mat causing a trip or manual handling hazard. | Ensure appropriate storage is available for anti-fatigue mat. |
| Placement of chair when not in use causing a trip hazard. | Ensure adequate space for positioning of chair when not in use to avoid creating a trip hazard to all staff. Chair positioning should not impede on users working area or thoroughfares. |

## Tips for Optimal Standing Posture:

- Imagine a string attached to the top of your head, pulling you upwards just enough to stretch you taller.
- Stand with your weight evenly distributed between your heel and the balls of your feet (imagine a triangle on the sole of your foot).
- Your feet should be about shoulder width, and pointing slightly outward.
- Avoid locking your knees.
- Tuck your tummy in and don't let your pelvis roll forward.
- Keep your shoulders back, don't let them slump forward.
- Relax your arms and let them hang naturally down the sides of your body.
- Hold your head up straight with your chin tucked in. Don't tilt your head either forward, backward or sideways. Look straight ahead.
- If standing for a long period of time, shift weight from one foot to the other, or rock from heels to toes.

**Internal Resources**

HSE-GUI-008a Ergonomic Workstation Self-Assessment

HSE-GUI-008c Standing Workstation Setup Guideline

HSE-GUI-008e Ergonomic Equipment Purchasing Guideline

HSE-GUI-008f Activity Based Work Guideline

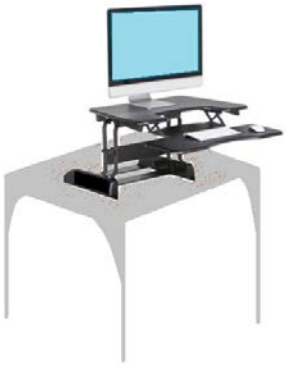
**External Resources**

Worksafe Queensland

Worksafe Queensland: Guidelines for the selection and use of sit to stand computer workstations

WorkRave Program

## Sit to Stand Workstation Considerations and Comparison

| Sit to Stand Desk Considerations | Whole Desk | Desktop Apparatus |
|---|---|---|
| **Example** |  |  |
| **Ease of Use** | • Can be electric or mechanical;<br>• Electric controls reduce the need for manual handling and are easier for those with musculoskeletal injuries to use;<br>• Mechanical controls usually involve a winding mechanism;<br>• Some whole desk options include programmable height settings. | • Manual handling required to lift and lower the desktop apparatus;<br>• Can be difficult for anyone who may be experiencing pain or discomfort in the back, shoulders, wrists/hands;<br>• Stability can vary between models;<br>• Maximum weight limit in place is specific to brand and model. |
| **Suitability for Work Tasks** | • Best suited for those who work with paper, computer and phone based tasks. | • Best suited for computer based tasks only;<br>• Often have insufficient space for additional items (books/paperwork/ phone etc). |
| **Working Posture** | • Optimal working posture able to be achieved in both sitting and standing positions, provided the desk raises to the correct standing height i.e. just below elbow level;<br>• Measure elbow height of user against height adjustments of desk before purchase;<br>• Allows for resting of forearms on desktop. | • Keyboard platform plus original desk thickness can make for insufficient room under desk for legs;<br>• Taller workers may not be able to reach optimal working postures. Measure elbow height of user against the height adjustments of the apparatus, specifically the keyboard platform;<br>• Does not allow for resting of forearms. |
| **Price / Installation** | • More expensive >$800 with price increasing with desk size;<br>• May require a trained installer;<br>• Requires electricity to operate and appropriate cord management;<br>• To be purchased from a JCU preferred supplier. | • Less expensive, often $400-$700 depending on size of apparatus;<br>• Usually comes with minimal installation requirements;<br>• To be purchased from a JCU preferred supplier. |