

## Considerations for a Safe Home Workstation

The following items should be considered by JCU Australian based staff who are working from home during the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020. Staff members should remain in regular contact with their Line Managers and colleagues throughout this period of altered work arrangements and have ongoing conversations regarding the effectiveness and suitability of these arrangements.

### Fitness for Work

Staff members are responsible for ensuring their own fitness for work and communicating this with their Line Manager. If staff members are unwell or unable to work due to other reasons, then leave entitlements are to be accessed.

### Work Arrangements

Staff should liaise with their Line Manager regarding their working from home arrangements e.g. start and finish times, factors which may impact on work completion e.g. childcare responsibilities.

### Physical Environment

Staff should consider which part of their residence is the best location for setting up a home workstation. Staff are to be mindful to clear the surrounding floor space of slip/trip hazards and separate their workstation from hazards like hot cooking surfaces.

### Children, Family, Pets

Given the unprecedented circumstances surrounding the pandemic, JCU acknowledge that children, family members and pets may be present in the vicinity of a home workstation. Wherever possible however, we encourage that the workstation be kept separate to ensure safety of any JCU equipment and maximise productivity. Some staff member's work will contain confidential information, appropriate measures should be taken to maintain this confidentiality such as logging out of the computer when not in use.

### Electrical Safety

Staff should inspect any electrical equipment to ensure it is in good working condition. Extension leads and power cables can create trip hazards and should be positioned in such a way to minimise this risk. Ensure adequate electrical equipment ventilation, and turn off equipment when not in use.

### Fire Safety

Staff should consider their emergency action plan in the unlikely event of a fire. Walkways and exits should be clear of obstructions and smoke alarms should be installed and working in line with the [QFES Legislation](#).

### Personal Security

Staff should consider what security measures they have in place at home, and take any necessary precautions to prevent unauthorized entry during work hours. In the essence of personal security as well as social distancing, staff are not to conduct face to face meetings with clients / staff / students at home. Zoom videoconferencing is a suitable and safe alternative.

### Safety Incidents

Staff should report any safety incidents such as injuries or hazards through JCU's risk management system [RiskWare](#) and seek any necessary medical treatment. In the event of an emergency Staff should contact 000.

### Injury Prevention

The Seated Workstation Setup Guide details optimal workstation setup. Staff Members are encouraged to take frequent short breaks to avoid repetition over a prolonged period of time and should incorporate a lunch break away from the computer each day.

### Seated Workstation Setup Guideline

Below is a step-by-step guide to optimal computer workstation setup. Where possible, Staff are to implement the recommendations below and speak to their Line Manager should they have any questions or concerns.

#### Seated Workstation Setup Guideline

- Step 1:  
Sitting  
Height** Adjust seat height so that the elbow angle is approximately 90° when operating keyboard, elbows should be slightly above the height of the desk surface. Use a footrest if feet need to be raised so they are flat and that knees and hips are level when seated.
- Step 2:  
Seated  
position** Sit back into the chair, most of the thigh should be supported. The backrest of the chair should be set so that lumbar support matches curve of lower back, and creates an angle of 90° – 110° at the hip. Arm rests should be removed if they prevent close access to the desk.
- Step 3:  
Monitor** Raise or lower the monitor height so that the eyes line up with the top edge of the computer screen, creating a 30° viewing angle when looking at the centre of the screen. Monitor should be positioned about an arm's length away (approximately 50cm) from the user. This may vary depending on a person's vision / use of bifocal glasses. When using a single monitor, place this directly in front of you. When using dual monitors, centre them both in front of you slightly angled in.
- Step 4:  
Keyboard** The keyboard should be positioned flat (kickstands down), and placed on the desk in a location that allows elbows to remain by the sides when keying, not out in front of the body. Centre the keyboard to the chest using the GH keys for letter-key work and reposition keyboard for number-key work or other desktop work. Forearms may rest on the desktop, or hover above the desktop whilst keying.
- Step 5:  
Mouse** Position the mouse so that it is as close to the keyboard as possible and aligned with the keyboard. A mouse pad is recommended. It is good practice to switch between left and right handed mouse use to reduce overuse of the dominant hand. Operate the mouse using the shoulder and elbow as the pivot point, rather than the wrist. Keyboard shortcuts assist to minimise mouse use.
- Step 6:  
Phone** Telephone should be positioned within arm reach on non-dominant side next to monitor. Avoid cradling a telephone / mobile phone between the ear and shoulder. Consider use of a headset or speaker phone to avoid cradling.
- Step 7:  
Workstation  
area** Ensure that there is sufficient legroom under the desk. Frequently used items should be within close reach, and unnecessary items positioned further away. Avoid glare and reflections from bright lights or windows. Minimise distracting and loud noise.
- Note:  
Laptop Use** Laptops should not be used for a prolonged period of time as they do not allow for optimal body positioning. If required to use a laptop for prolonged periods of time, it is recommended that an external monitor or laptop stand is used, together with an external keyboard and mouse.
- Note:  
Breaks** Rotate tasks frequently, take microbreaks every 30 minutes to alter body position, incorporate movement, and rest eyes by looking away from the monitor screen. Once every 30-60 minutes, stand up and walk around, Consider setting calendar reminders for breaks.
- Note:  
Gym Balls** Gym balls are a useful exercise and rehabilitation tool, but are not suitable for use as an office chair due to their lack of postural support and the creation of a hazard within the workplace.