

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HOME OFFICE

All you need to know when working from home

Gain insight into

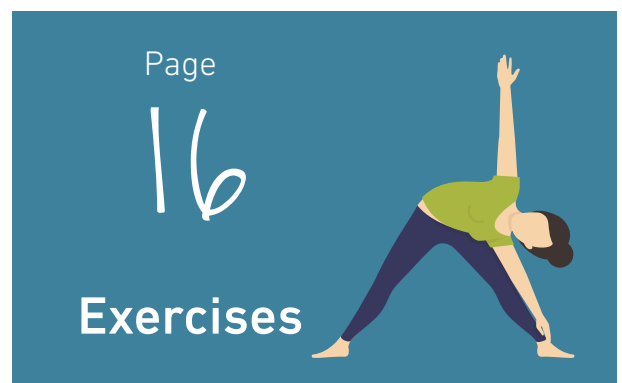
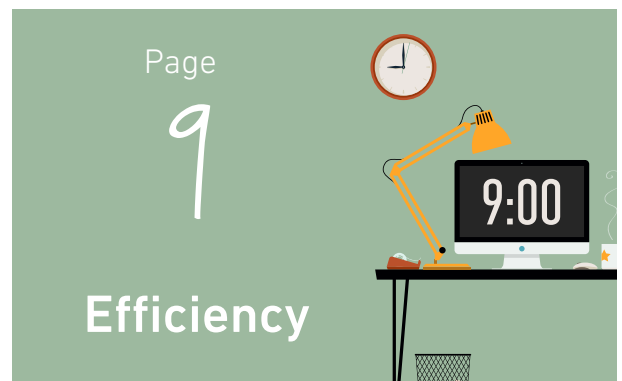
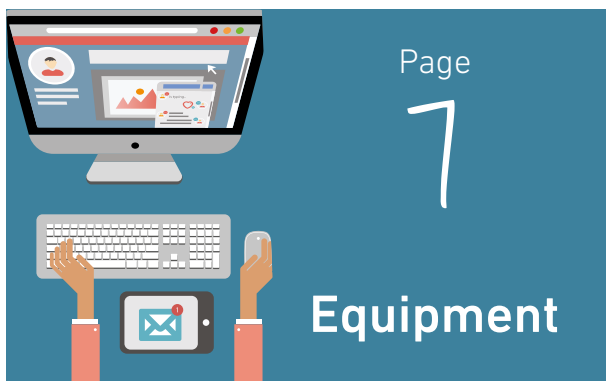


tax rules and possible deductions, inspiration for decor, injury prevention exercises and much more



The pandemic has changed how we work.
Many of us now work from home in a way that
we never have before.

By covering six separate topics, this guide will help you to set up a healthy and
productive home office.



Interior design

When designing your home office, it is a good idea to start with three well-founded pointers.

Doing so increases the likelihood of keeping your body healthy and pain-free, which can be difficult when you lead a work-life that mainly takes place behind a desk and in front of a computer.

The rules for designing your home office are:



1

Have room to move: You need to arrange your home office so that you have room to move. Changing working positions is the key to a physically healthy working life in your home office.

2

Make it easy to get up: You must design your home office so that it is easy to get up and stretch your body. A height-adjustable desk is ideal, but your position should be easy and convenient to get up from in any case. The deep armchair rarely invites you to handle the next task standing.

3

Have furniture and equipment that suits you: Your home office must be tailored to you. This means, for example, that your chair, desk, and equipment (keyboard, mouse, monitor, etc.) must have the correct dimensions and details according to your needs.

Once the overarching principles have set the framework for your home office, you can consider what should characterise your space. How do you create a workspace that is efficient, good for your body and at the same time a space that fits well in your style?

Here are 5 simple tips on how you create the perfect work space:

Let office be office and living room be living room. Separating the office from the other rooms of the home makes it easier to relax when you have free time and work without interruption from the filled dishwasher, an overflowing clothes basket, or the dust that dances on the shelves while you work.

1

2

Choose colours you like but which do not become (too) disturbing. If you feel particularly inspired when you are surrounded by green, go with a green colour for the walls, but just consider once more whether it should be that turquoise, or whether it becomes a little too much after 4-5 hours of work.

Take into account the effect of light sources. Light may not be what you think about most - as long as it's there, it's fine, isn't it? But no, that is not really the case. Improper or inadequate lighting can result in overworked eyes. Go for a design where the light becomes a combination of daylight (which comes in from the side) and light from a good table lamp (where the light comes from the other side).

3



4

Make room for thoughts and ideas. Hang a bulletin board or a whiteboard on the wall so you have a place to store your creative (or not so creative, but still important) ideas.

5

Create a wholeness in the room. A home office can quickly become a messy affair where non-office stuff ends up filling the space. It is difficult to prevent the box with heirlooms from your great-grandmother or the children's discarded toys from moving in when there is a lack of space in the other rooms. If you lay a loose rug on the floor that matches the overall elements, you can create wholeness despite the many different elements in the room.

Furniture

What furniture should you have in the home office, what style should it be and what features should it have?

If you want to avoid back pain or a sore neck, then it's best that you consider good quality office furniture.



Choosing a chair for your home office

- 1 Must be stable
 - 2 Must ensure that you have freedom of movement to different appropriate working positions
 - 3 You should be able to change the height of the seat. Similarly, the seat's angle should be adjustable.
 - 4 The back of the chair must also be adjustable in height and preferably be able to be adjusted at an angle
- It must be possible to adjust the different parts of the chair, such as the seat and backrest and possibly the armrests, independently of each other.

Source: The Working Community for the Working Environment for Welfare and Public Administration, Denmark

We have created an Ergonomic checklist for setting up your workstation, which helps you set up your furniture correctly. Get it [here](#).

Choosing a desk for your home office

- 1 Should have a surface that does not reflect light
- 2 Should be wide and deep enough to allow you to properly position your monitor, keyboard, and mouse
- 3 The height of the table should suit you and the work tasks you perform

Equipment

For many people choosing the right keyboard, mouse and monitor are very important.



A good keyboard for your home office

- 1 Must support an ergonomically correct working position with the arms placed in front of the keyboard
- 2 Shortcut keys will reduce unnecessary mouse work, reducing strain on hands, wrists and fingers
- 3 Must have adjustable feet so you can vary your working position and reduce the strain on your hands, fingers and wrists
- 4 Should be able to be set to negative tilt. It will help you to relax more in the fingers while typing

See
examples of
ergonomic
keyboards
[here](#)

A good mouse for your home office

- 1 Must fit you and your ergonomic needs
- 2 You can choose an ergonomic one-handed mouse, which promotes a correct hand position and which also offers the benefit of adjustability
- 3 Your second option is an ergonomically centered mouse. This innovative type of mouse is located in front of the keyboard, minimising your workspace. You can work with small, light movements and thus avoid overloading your neck, shoulder, elbows and wrists

See
examples of
ergonomic
one-handed
mice [here](#)

See
example
of ergonomic
centred mice
[here](#)

A good monitor for your home office

- 1 Should preferably be 24 inches or larger. With such size, you can have multiple windows open simultaneously, so you do not have to click around between different windows. Ultimately, it reduces the strain of using a mouse.
- 2 Must be non-reflective, so you avoid glare
- 3 Must be able to tilt and adjust in height so that you can adapt the screen's location to your needs

Source: The Working Community for the Working Environment for Welfare and Public Administration, Denmark

Efficiency

When all your stuff and no colleagues surround you, it can be challenging to refrain from getting distracted and not lose momentum in the workflow. It is easy to get caught up doing the laundry, mopping the floor, or getting to those low tasks on the to-do list.

So, what can you do about it?



1 Get started

The first step on the road to getting started is actually getting started - instead of just watching the morning news (again), drinking an extra cup of coffee, and doing the laundry.

2 Design a good working environment

It may feel comfortable to work from the couch, but it is only a matter of time before your body begins to object. Setting up a comfortable and practical workstation will help you to be more productive.

2

3 Schedule your day

Meetings, deadlines, lunch breaks, etc. By having some fixed, time-bound appointments during the day, you avoid the hours getting mixed up and you spend too much or too little time on certain tasks.

3

Schedule meetings with colleagues

One of the things that is lost when working from home is the impulsive conversations with colleagues, which can both help with problem solving and create a greater connection to the workplace. It is difficult to transfer the impulsive to the home office, so try instead to schedule some video meetings during the day. They do not have to take a long time or have a planned purpose, but just so you have the opportunity to “chit-chat”.

4

Share your calendar with your colleagues

It is a good idea if you and your colleagues each keep a public work calendar, which everyone can follow. This way you get insight into each other's working day, which can stimulate a conversation that otherwise risks being lost with work from home.

5

Scheduled breaks

Stretch your body and rest your head. There are not the same natural breaks in a home office as in the workplace. Therefore, you need to plan your breaks.

6

When the working day is over

You need to stop working. Avoid getting working time and leisure mixed up in a big mess where you always have one foot in both camps.

7

Rules

Legislation on working from home

Working from home is a flexible work environment, where employees work from home some or all of the time. Some workers may find certain benefits in working from home, such as added productivity, better work-life balance, increased job satisfaction. From an employer angle, the benefits are higher staff retention and reduced office rent and travel costs.



If you are working from home - either full time or as part of a hybrid model - there are different legislations and responsibilities that you and your employer must be aware of in terms of the working environment and tax.

It is both the employee and the employers' responsibility to ensure that working from home happens in a safe environment and can be conducted according to both parties wishes.

Employers must always:

- 1 be open to conversations on hybrid working arrangements
- 2 consider which jobs can be done flexibly
- 3 discuss with the worker how to find a suitable solution

Source: ACAS

In this section, you can learn more about the demands you can put forward to your employer regarding your home office. You can also read more about available tax claims when you work from home consistently.

What can you ask of your employer?

As a worker, you can always make an informal request for flexible working or a formal proposal. If your employers grant you the opportunity to work more from home, you may demand that certain conditions be met to secure a safe and healthy environment.

- | Employers have a legal responsibility for the health and safety of all workers. This includes both those who are consistently in the office and those working under a more dynamic arrangement.
- 2 Employers must assess a workers' work and workplace if any arrangement regarding work from home has been made. The law requires that this assessment must be "suitable and sufficient".
- 3 If the assessment concludes that changes must be made, the employer is responsible for ensuring that they happen accordingly. Regular check-ups must be scheduled to ensure that the working environment is consistently up to code.

[Find out more about what employers should do from the Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\).](#)

Equipment and technology

Employees need to have the right equipment and technology required to work from home effectively. It secures a smooth transition and reduces the risk of stress and physical ailments if conditions are poor. Things employers, workers and any representatives should agree on include:

- | What is the essential requirement, for example, a reliable and secure internet connection and a fitting desk and chair
- 2 Who will provide equipment and repairs
- 3 Technical support for setting up equipment and IT
- 4 What is needed in terms of ergonomic solutions to avoid injuries such as specialised mouse and keyboard

Employers must have clear policies on equipment and IT, including:

- | how to report possible issues to, e.g., the IT team
- 2 how to monitor, use, and handle information
- 3 data protection and cyber security
- 4 protocols if a device is lost or stolen

Source: ACAS

What is your responsibility?

Workers have a responsibility to take care of their safety and general health while working from home. Anyone who is under a hybrid working arrangement must be in regular contact with their manager and tell them about:

- | Physical or mental health challenges and risks
- 2 Any amendments to the working conditions that need to change

It is essential with frequent communication between workers and managers to ensure a smooth and safe solution.

Source: ACAS

Home office and tax

Working from home and tax claims

The legislation regarding working from home and tax claims depends on being forced to work at home regularly. Either for the whole week or as part of a hybrid model. If you choose to work from home voluntarily, you cannot claim any tax relief from your costs related to doing your job.

If you are working from home involuntarily, you may be able to claim tax relief for:

- | Gas and electricity
- 2 Metered water
- 3 Phone calls and internet access (if not provided by your employer)

You are not able to claim for total bills, but rather the part relates to work. If you have bought equipment to do your job, such as a laptop, a chair, or a keyboard, you can also claim tax relief.

You will get tax relief based on the rate at which you pay tax. You can choose to either claim tax relief on:

- | £6 a week
- 2 the exact amount of extra costs you have incurred above the weekly amount - you will need evidence such as receipts, bills or contracts

Source: UK Government

Checking insurance cover

If working from home, you are not covered by your employer's insurance similarly as you would be in the office.

Therefore, workers must always check there are no issues with them working from home, with their:

- | home insurance provider
- ↳ mortgage provider or landlord

It is always a good idea for employers to remind workers to check this. Employers should also make sure their insurance covers workers working from home.

Who covers inventory?

How inventory such as furniture and equipment is covered depends solely on who owns the respective units. Your insurance will cover if you are working on your privately owned computer in your home office, whereas your employer's insurance will cover if they have provided a laptop for you.

Who covers possible injuries?

Employer's Liability insurance offers some cover for remote workers, but this will ultimately depend on the available policy.

An Employer's Liability insurance policy covers all 'clerical activities' done at home or remotely, but there are a few grey areas. For instance, injuries or illnesses sustained during office hours may not be 'in the course of employee's work'.

The law on working from home and the policies that go with it is often difficult to navigate, why it is recommended to get an overview from the insurance provider.

Exercises

Physical activity is essential for maintaining a healthy and pain-free body when you have sedentary work.

This is especially true when working from a home office, where the natural physical breaks such as a walk to the coffee machine, a meeting room, or a colleague's table do not occur.

You need to keep your body going in the home office. You can do that with exercises.



Good exercises for the home office

You will need some floor space, a resistance band, and a level surface such as a table.

The exercises have been developed in collaboration with Physiotherapist Jarle Marheim from Marheim Consulting. They focus on alleviating ailments and discomfort an office worker may experience and are all suitable for doing in an office environment.

All exercises are designed to be done in 2-3 sets with 10-15 repetitions in each.

The exercises must never result in pain, which is why small adjustments may be necessary.

Exercise for shoulder

- 1 Tie the middle of the resistance band at hip height or slightly higher, for example on a door handle, and stand with your face against the door handle
- 2 Grasp one end of the resistance band with each hand and pull the band backwards without bending at the elbow joint
- 3 Slowly let the arms return to the starting point and repeat

See more
exercises on
our
youtube channel
Be Active

Exercise for shoulder and back

- 1 Stand with slightly spread legs, straight back, and the end of the resistance band in each hand
- 2 Your thumbs should point upwards and the elbows should be slightly bent
- 3 Stretch your arms up over your head
- 4 Pull your hands apart and down so that the band is stretched

Exercise for forearm

- 1 Sit on a chair at a table
- 2 Lay the band stretched out on the table in front of you
- 3 Let your arms rest on the table with the palm of your right hand facing up and the palm of your left hand facing down. The band should be under your hands.
- 4 Cross your arms with your right arm at the top so that they cross approximately at your wrist
- 5 Grasp the band with both hands (it may need to be placed in the palm of your right hand as it points upwards)
- 6 With the band in your hands, rotate your right hand away from the left to tighten the band
- 7 Repeat the exercise with the opposite arm

Good habits in the home office

- 1 Sit for a maximum of one hour at a time before getting up and going for a walk
- 2 Make sure your forearms are well supported when you work - they should be able to rest
- 3 Get fresh air - preferably several times
- 4 Introduce office exercises

Want to know more about ergonomics, ergonomically correct work, and how ergonomic equipment can prevent and relieve pain?

Then sign up for our newsletter. We send you an email once a month and you can of course always unsubscribe again.

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