



STATE OF NEW MEXICO

# Workers' Compensation Administration

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**ONE TEAM | ONE GOAL**

A Better New Mexico for Workers and Employers

## Ergonomics: Working at Home

# What is Ergonomics?

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It's the process of designing the job to fit the employee rather than forcing the employee's body to fit the job.



# Why is Ergonomics Important?

- Overexertion is a leading cause of injuries
- Recurring/persistent pain may develop in future
- Bodily reaction is a leading cause of workplace injuries
- Repetitive motion one of the top 10 most common workplace injuries

# Preventing Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs)

- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Back/Neck Strain
- Tennis Elbow
- Tendinitis
- Sciatica

# Selecting the Best Work Area at Home and Using Household Items

## Home Workstation

- Desk
- Dining Room
- Kitchen
- Living Room
- Bedroom

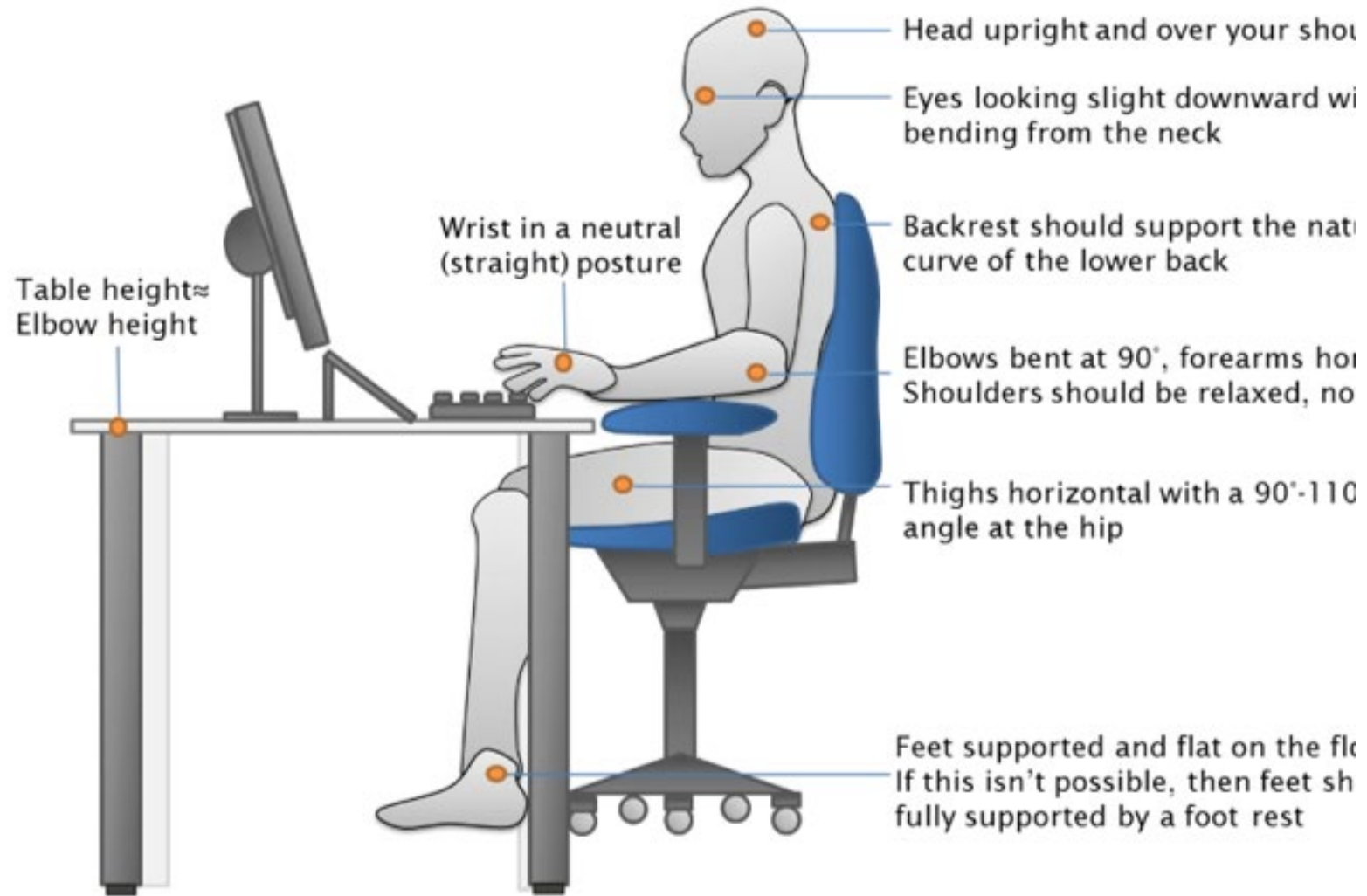
## Household Items

- Desk
- Table/Counter
- Chair/Stool
- Blankets, Towels
- Boxes, Books

# Home Desk Workstation

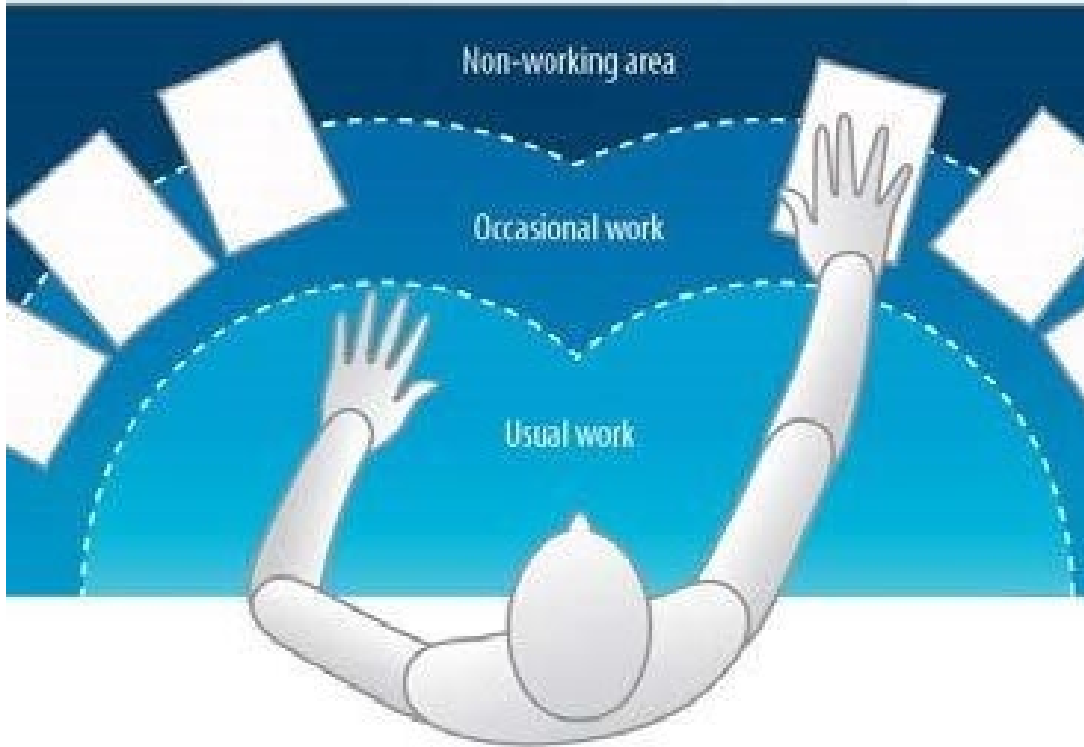
- No matter what area of the home is chosen for work, it's important to set equipment for the ideal ergonomics.
- Top of monitor at or just below eye level
- Head and neck balanced and in-line with torso
- Shoulders relaxed
- Elbows close to body and supported
- Lower back supported
- Wrists and hands in-line with forearms
- Adequate room for keyboard and mouse
- Feet flat on the floor





Good  
Working  
Posture

# Workstation Work Zones

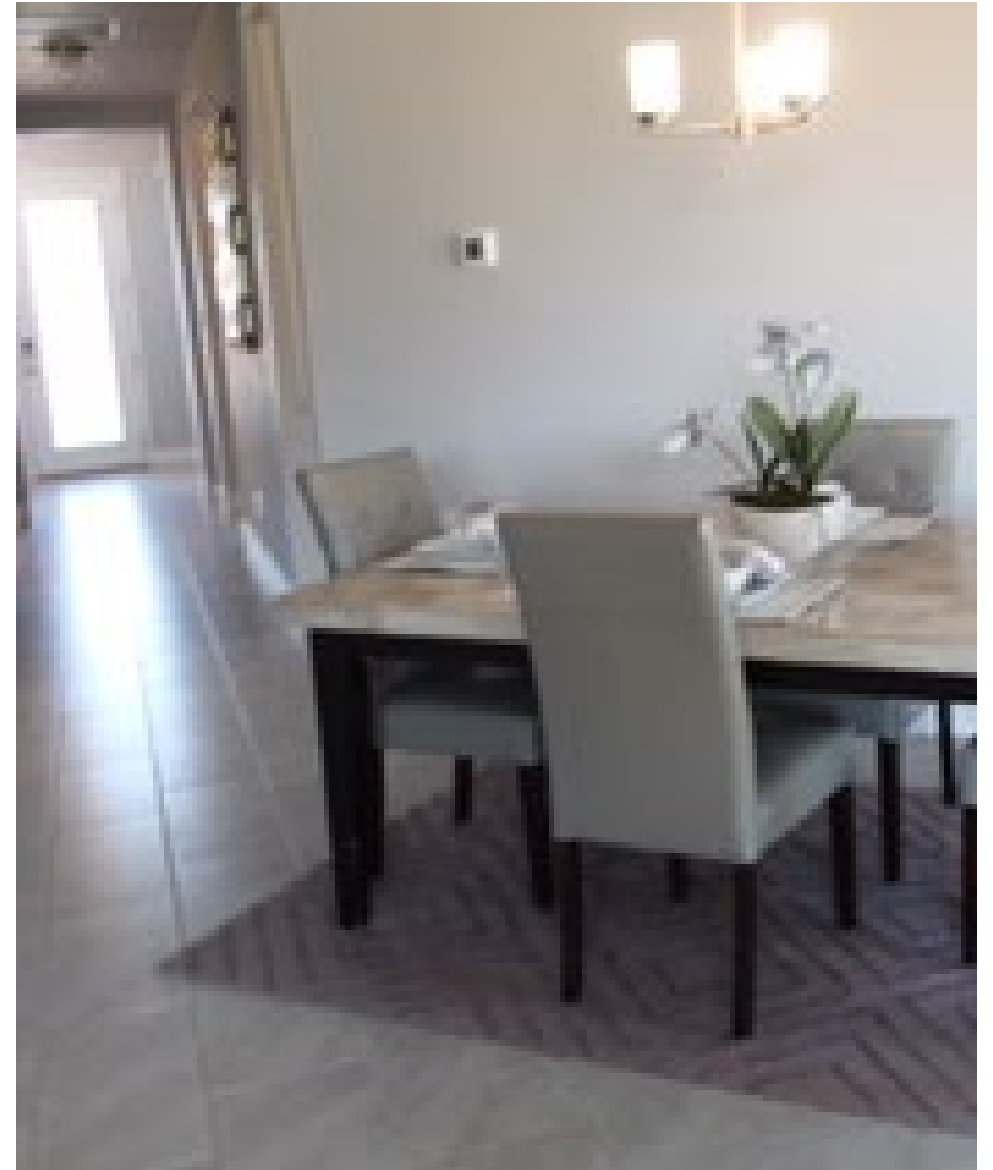


- Limit reaching and static posture to prevent strains.
- Place frequently used items in the primary work zone (mouse, keyboard).
- Monitor and phone placed in secondary work zone.
- Infrequently used items placed in non-work zone.



## Dining Room Table Workstation

- Another workstation option is your dining room table.
- It provides adequate workspace for your computer monitor and/or laptop.
- Table height is typically 30 inches from the floor.
- Dining room chair height from seat pan to floor is ideal.



## Dining Room Table Workstation (cont.)

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- Back supported when sitting vertical or leaning back slightly.
- Use a pillow or a rolled-up towel for increased lumbar support.
- Thighs and hips are supported and parallel to the floor.
- Knees are same height as the hips with the feet slightly forward.



# Dining Room Table Workstation (cont.)

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- Adjust your chair so that elbows sit at a 90-degree angle.
- Thighs should be parallel to the floor and feet should sit flat.
- If feet dangle, put a box or some books on the floor to support them.
- Elbows stay close to the body and bent between 90 and 120 degrees.



# Kitchen Countertop Workstation

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- The kitchen counter is a good option to work from because the surface is level.
- Height of the countertop is typically 36 inches above the floor.
- Allows your shoulders to be relaxed with arms at the side.



# Kitchen Countertop Workstation (cont.)

## Sit

Sit at a comfortable distance from the counter where you can easily read all text.

## Head

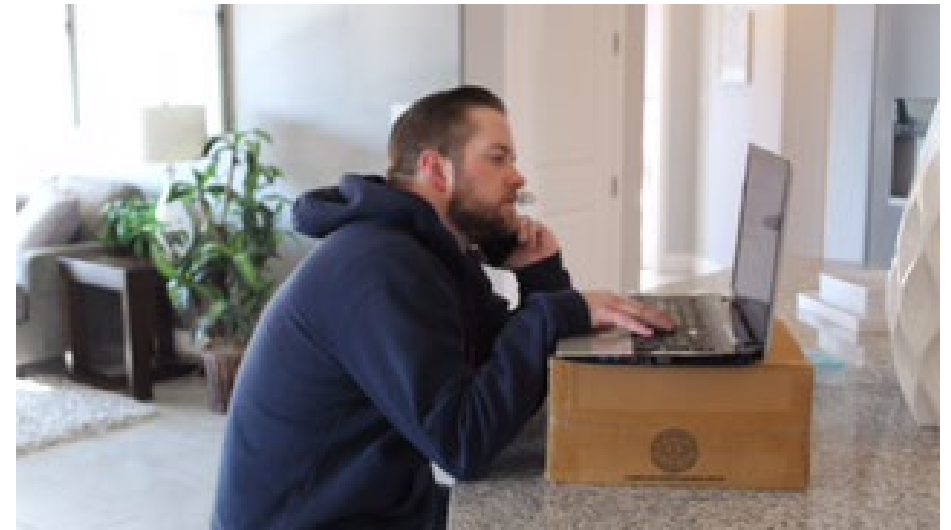
Head and torso in an upright posture with back supported by your chair.

## Top

Top of your monitor or laptop should be at or slightly below eye level.



Correct



Incorrect

# Kitchen Countertop Workstation (cont.)

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- Raise height of monitor placing a box or books underneath.
- Tilt monitor so it's perpendicular to your line of sight.
- Rest your eyes periodically by focusing on objects that are 20 feet away).



# Bedroom Workstation

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- The bedroom isn't the best workstation location.
- Many utilize it as an alternative workspace during part of the day.
- The most common workspace in the bedroom is the bed.



# Bedroom Workstation (contd.)



Support your lower back, neck, and shoulders using a blanket or pillow.

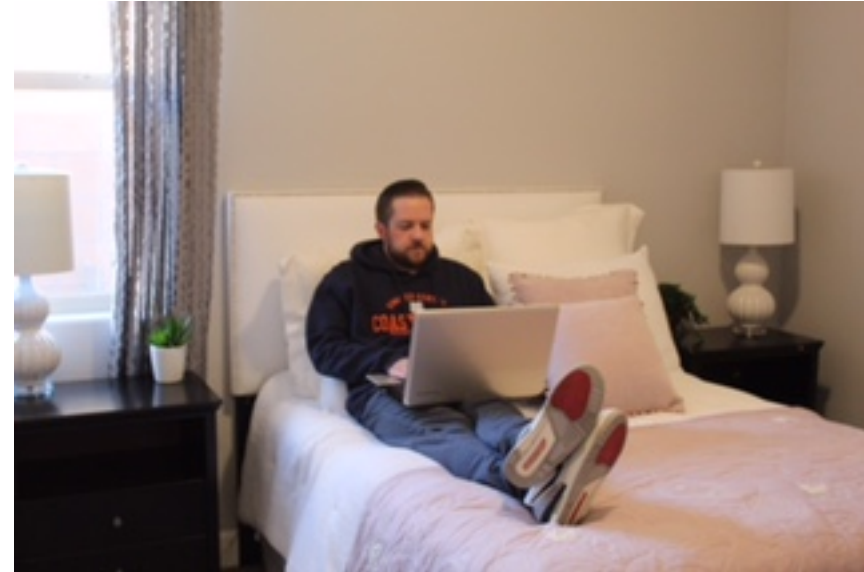


Laptop viewing angle at or slightly below eye level to prevent neck strains.



Elevate your knees by placing a rolled-up towel under your knees to reduce strains.

Correct



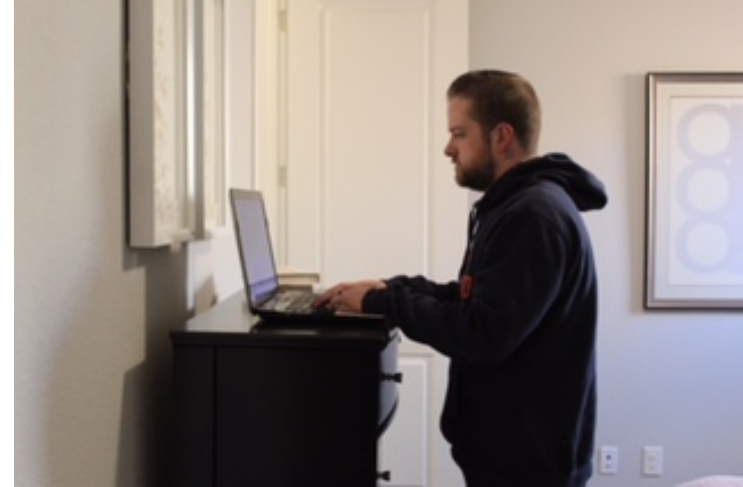
Incorrect





# Standing Bedroom Workstation

- Your legs, torso, neck and head should be in-line and vertical.
- Feet slightly apart, you may elevate one foot in this posture.
- Maintain proper typing position for the arms, wrists, and hands.
- Take breaks every 15-25 minutes to prevent eye strain.



Correct



Incorrect

# How to roll a bath towel for lumbar/sacral support

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- Step 1. Open towel onto a flat surface.
- Step 2. Fold towel in half, the width of the towel to be at least the width of your hips.
- Step 3. Roll towel starting from longer end. A tight roll makes a denser towel and provides more support.
- Step 4. Continue to roll the full length of the towel.



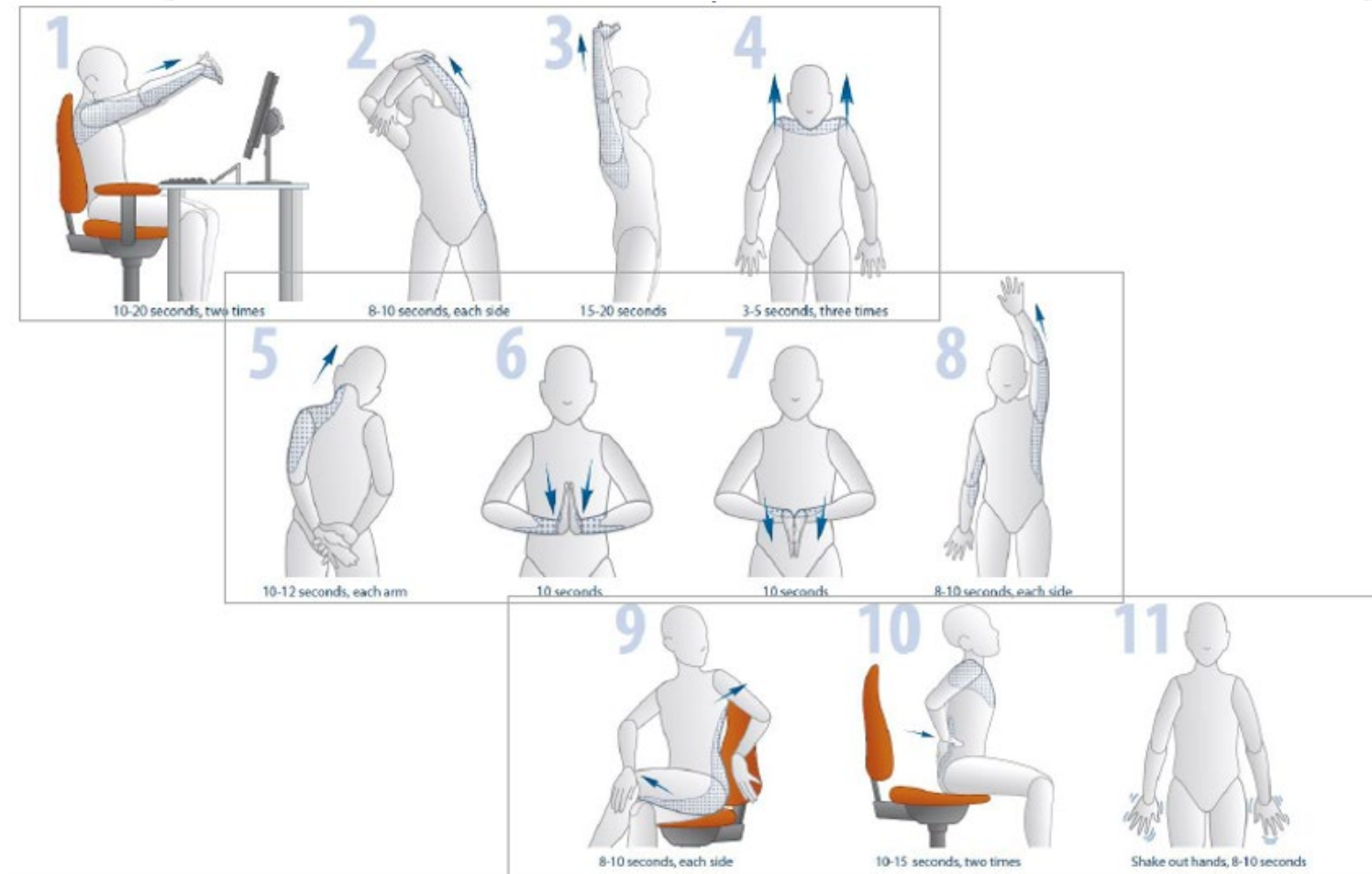
## How to roll a bath towel for lumbar/sacral support (cont.)

- Step 5. Place the roll against the backrest.
- You may need more than one towel to build continuous support from hips to your lower back.
- Adjust towels until you feel comfortable and well supported.



# Stretch Breaks

- Sitting for long periods often causes neck and shoulder stiffness.
- Do these stretches every hour or so throughout the day.
- Get up off your chair and stretch your legs every 30 minutes.



## Further Resources

The listed websites contain ergonomic information for office and industrial work settings, as well as for work techniques.

- **Federal OSHA**
- <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/index.html>
- **Cal-OSHA**
- <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/>
- **National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH)**
- <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/>