



Factsheet

My Healthy WorkSpace – Sitting Well

If your work requires you to sit for extended periods of time, you must do it safely.

Sitting for long periods of time is common to a wide range of professions and occupations in Australia. A lack of physical activity in the workspace can cause a range of health problems including cardio-vascular disease, diabetes, mental health issues and musculoskeletal disorders that can lead to headaches and chronic neck, shoulder and back pain.

Take regular breaks from sitting! Even for those who exercise daily, if they sit for over 7 hours per day and for longer than 30 minutes without a break, this can cause spinal health problems.

What professions and occupations require workers to sit for long periods of time?

Any form of computer work in an office or at home, general office duties and administration, transportation and highly mechanised trades.

What impact could work-related sitting have on the spinal health of workers?

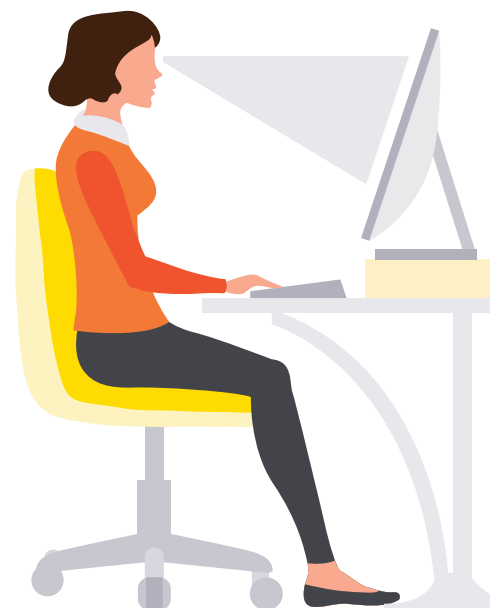
For those who consistently sit with poor posture or don't use an ergonomically designed chair or workstation, this can cause poor spinal health that can lead to chronic neck and back pain. Low back pain is the leading cause of disability globally with work-related musculoskeletal disorders the leading work health and safety (WHS) problem in Australia.

Maintaining good posture is key!

With prevention as the best protection against all workspace injuries, for work involving prolonged periods of sitting while driving or using a computer anywhere, maintaining good posture is imperative to spinal health.

If you use a computer at home or in an office, the following simple steps can help maintain good posture to help minimise musculoskeletal disorders that can lead to chronic pain.

- Sit with feet flat on the ground or use a foot rest.
- Slide your bottom back into a supportive, ergonomic chair.
- Hips should be positioned slightly higher than your knees.
- Sit relaxed and tall – ensure head/chin is NOT poking forward.
- Hands should rest just slightly lower than the elbows.
- Computer screens should be positioned so the eyes look straight ahead and not down.
- If using a laptop for long periods, use a separate keyboard and mouse to ensure proper neck and shoulder posture.



**If your work also involves lifting and bending, download the additional Factsheets.*

Good habits can help maintain spinal health.

- Make it a habit to monitor your posture to ensure you're sitting properly.
- Every 30 minutes, take regular breaks from sitting by standing up and moving around.
- Vary work tasks to change posture such as standing while talking on the phone.
- Use adjustable 'sit-stand' desks to allow different working positions.
- Arrange 'active' meetings that involve walking while talking.
- Arrange your desk so that items are within easy reach.
- Relocate rubbish bins from desks to necessitate additional walking.
- Do regular stretches throughout the day by using the Straighten Up app.
- Take lunch breaks away from your desk and go outdoors to walk when possible.
- Walk to deliver a message to a colleague rather than emailing, texting or calling.

How can employers help minimise workspace injuries from prolonged sitting?

In Australia, employers have a responsibility to keep workers safe from the risks of prolonged sitting. To help prevent health risks from prolonged sitting, employers should ensure ergonomic design and seating, and incorporate 'sit-stand' workstations where possible, allowing for workers to vary their posture and movements alternating between sitting, standing and walking at regular intervals.

Download ACA's free resources to help minimise workspace injuries caused by extended sitting.

Ergonomic Checklist

Download the **free Ergonomic Checklist** to learn how to set up a safe and effective ergonomic workspace anywhere to help ensure positive spinal health habits. The easy-to-follow Checklist provides important tips including using an ergonomic office chair, adjusting laptops to eye level, positioning knees slightly below the hips when sitting, sitting with an upright posture and being reminded about posture and taking regular movement breaks.

Download the Ergonomic Checklist today by visiting spinalhealth.org.au

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Spinal Health Month is the Australian Chiropractors Association's flagship campaign aimed at educating Australians about the importance of maintaining positive spinal health. Look for the ACA Member logo at your local chiropractor or to locate an ACA chiropractor near you, visit

consultchiro.org.au

For a full list of references, visit chiro.org.au/references