



Ergonomic Support for Remote Employees Program

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this program is to ensure University of Oregon (UO) employees, who are assigned to work in a remote location, receive ergonomic training and have access to further ergonomic guidance when needed. Employees working remotely should be able to do so safely, efficiently and comfortably. *Refer to Appendix A for definitions.*

2. **SCOPE**

This program applies to UO employees who are assigned to work from a remote location using a computer for 20 hours a week or more.

3. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

a. Departments

Departments are responsible for:

1. Contacting Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) to request a new employee be added to the Humantech Office Ergonomics program.
2. Notifying employees about the *Ergonomic Support for Remote Employees Program*.
3. Advising remote employees to complete the online Humantech Office Ergonomics training and self-assessment.
4. Approving the loan of Ergonomic Lending Library (ELL) furniture or equipment by signing the [Property Receipt Form](#).

b. Employees

Employees are responsible for:

1. Completing the online Humantech Office Ergonomics training and self-assessment.
2. Contacting EHS when further ergonomic assistance is needed.
3. Ensuring their remote workspace is safe and comfortable.
4. When borrowing ELL furniture or equipment, reading and signing the [Property Receipt Form](#) and submitting it to their department for approval.
5. Safely picking up and returning ELL furniture or equipment.
6. Safeguarding borrowed ELL furniture or equipment while it at the remote location and when transporting it. This includes protecting it from damage, theft or loss. Items that are missing, broken or not operating properly must be reported to EHS immediately.

c. Environmental Health and Safety

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Department is responsible for:

1. Administering and managing the *Ergonomic Support for Remote Employees Program*.



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2. Providing training materials and continued support to employees and departments as outlined in this program.
3. Ensuring all employees have access to Humantech Office Ergonomics and following up with employees after the training and self-assessment has been completed to address any areas of concern.
4. Assisting employees in selecting and borrowing ELL furniture or equipment. This includes providing guidance for lifting and moving furniture for transport to and from the remote location.
5. Completing the [Property Receipt Form](#) for the employee and department signatures when ELL furniture or equipment is requested.

4. TRAINING & ERGONOMIC ASSISTANCE

- a. Remote employees participating in the program should complete the Humantech Office Ergonomics training and self-assessment. New employees are encouraged to complete the program within 30 days of their hire date.
- b. Further assistance is available from EHS including:
 1. Onsite and remote ergonomic guidance and assessments
 2. Chair assistance (how to adjust, repair/maintenance concerns, etc.)
 3. Loaning items from the ELL
 4. Individual or group training

5. EMPLOYEE FURNITURE GUIDANCE

Employees who are choosing to personally purchase furniture, such as a desk or chair, have various options for suppliers. See *Appendix C – Some Options for Office Furniture Purchases*. Further ergonomic guidance is provided in *Appendix B - General Ergonomic Recommendations*.

6. RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT FOR LAPTOPS

When a laptop is utilized as a primary computer, it is strongly recommended that some additional computer hardware be used by the employee. Laptops cannot be easily adjusted to fit the user. For example:

- a. When the keyboard is set at a comfortable height, the monitor will be too low causing the user to look down and/or slouch to view the screen.
- b. Alternatively, when the laptop monitor is raised to a comfortable height, the keyboard will be too high resulting in the user reaching away from the body.

These awkward body positions may become uncomfortable and, over time, can lead to injury. Connecting the laptop to a separate monitor allows the screen to be adjusted to a proper height. The larger screen is easier to view with less potential for eye or neck strain. Additionally, a separate keyboard and mouse provides for flexibility and comfort when using a laptop. See [USS Device and Hardware Standards](#) for information on standard supported hardware models.



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7. ERGONOMIC LENDING LIBRARY

The Ergonomic Lending Library (ELL) has furniture, computer hardware and other equipment to help improve employee comfort and productivity. Items are loaned for trial use of up to 30 days. EHS can provide the employee or department with information on where ELL items can be purchased. Examples of lending library equipment include:

- a. Keyboards
- b. Pointing devices (mice, trackballs, etc.)
- c. Alternative chairs and stools
- d. Height adjustable workstations (desk converters)
- e. Footrests
- f. Anti-fatigue mats

A [Property Receipt Form](#) must be completed and signed by the employee and department prior to an item or items being loaned. The employee is responsible for picking up and returning ELL items to the designated location.

8. PROGRAM REVIEW

- a. The *Ergonomic Support for Remote Employees Program* will be reviewed annually by EHS. Program revisions will be made as necessary.

9. APPENDICES

- a. Appendix A – Definitions
- b. Appendix B – General Ergonomic Recommendations
- c. Appendix C – Some Options for Office Furniture Purchases

10. DOCUMENTATION

Original Preparation Date: August 10, 2021
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Latest Revision Number: N/A



Ergonomic Support for Remote Employees Program Appendix A – Definitions

DEFINITIONS

This appendix identifies and defines various terms within the context of the *University of Oregon Ergonomic Support for Remote Employees Program*.

1. **“Assessment”** – An assessment is an evaluation of the workspace with the intent of identifying risk factors and offering recommendations to improve employee comfort, safety and efficiency.
2. **“Ergonomics”** – Ergonomics is an applied science concerned with designing and arranging things people use so that the people and things interact most efficiently and safely. Very simply, it is fitting the work/task to the person rather than fitting the person to the work/task.
3. **“Humantech Office Ergonomics”** – Humantech Office Ergonomics is a web-based solution for office ergonomics training and self-assessment. The training guides employees in properly arranging and adjusting furniture, computer hardware and other equipment. The self-assessment provides immediate feedback and recommendations to make ergonomic improvements.
4. **“Remote”** – Remote is a department assigned work location that is not in a UO building. A remote workspace is often in an employee’s home.



Ergonomic Support for Remote Employees Program **Appendix B – General Ergonomic Recommendations**

Below are general ergonomic recommendations for remote workspaces to promote comfort and productivity. The Humantech Office Ergonomics training and self-assessment will provide further guidance. Visit the [Ergonomics](#) webpage for more resources.

Chair

1. It is best to use an office type chair on wheels/casters that is height adjustable. Additional adjustments, such as arm height, back angle, back height and seat depth can improve the chair fit and comfort.
2. Feet should be fully supported by the floor. If not use a footrest or similar item (box, block of wood, etc.) to support the feet.
3. Sit against the back of the chair. The back and spine should be supported in an upright or very slightly reclined position. If additional support is needed, consider using a back or lumbar support cushion.

Desk/Worksurface

1. Use a dedicated workspace. Avoid having to frequently move or put away the computer and work supplies.
2. Place the keyboard at elbow height or slightly lower. To determine elbow height, shoulders should be relaxed with the arms resting comfortably at the sides of the body, elbows bent at 90°-100° and wrists straight.
 - a. If the keyboard is too high, raise the chair or use an additional seat cushion to raise the body. Alternatively, a lower desk/worksurface or an adjustable keyboard tray can be used.
 - b. If the keyboard is too low, lower the chair or raise the keyboard and mouse (using a box, wood, books, etc.). Alternatively, a higher desk/worksurface can be used.
3. The keyboard and mouse should be placed on the same level (not differing heights) and located close to each other.

Monitor

1. Location - Place the monitor directly in front of the body and the keyboard.
2. Height - Monitor height should allow for viewing the screen by looking straight ahead. Don't tilt the head up/down, lean forward or slouch to see the screen. If the head is tilted up, try lowering the monitor. Conversely, if the head is tilted down or the body is slouched, try raising the monitor.



Ergonomic Support for Remote Employees Program **Appendix B – General Ergonomic Recommendations**

3. Distance - Most people are comfortable with the screen being about an arm's length or approximately 20"- 30" away from the body. If the screen seems blurred, try adjusting the distance from the body.

Laptop

1. For optimal comfort when using a laptop as a primary computer, consider docking or connecting the laptop to the following:
 - a. A separate monitor to allow the screen to be adjusted to a proper height.
 - b. A separate keyboard and mouse to provide flexibility and comfort.

Microbreaks

1. A microbreak is a brief period of 30 seconds to 2 minutes to change the body position.
2. Walking to a printer or to get a glass of water is an example of a microbreak. Some people like to do a few gentle exercises.
3. It's important to move. Consider taking a microbreak at least once an hour when sitting or standing for extended periods.



Ergonomic Support for Remote Employees Program **Appendix C – Some Options for Office Furniture Purchases**

Local Office Furniture Dealers

Below are office furniture dealers in the local area. Office furniture dealers typically sell many manufacturer's lines of chairs and desks. This allows for various options to fit most budgets. Some office furniture dealers have individual items and packages for people working remotely.

- [King Office Designs](#), 541-926-5894
- [Office World](#), 541-687-9074
- [WorkSite Solutions](#), 541-681-4074

Online Suppliers

There are various online suppliers, such as Amazon or Office Depot, who sell chairs, desks and other items for offices. Below are some other online suppliers that have been used for Ergonomic Lending Library furniture and equipment.

- [Ergotron](#)
- [Fully](#)
- [Vari](#)
- [Versadesk](#)

Checking reviews for the supplier and item(s) being purchased can be helpful. Also, it's good to determine if there is a warranty and how it will be serviced should you need to use it.

Note: Participants in the Ergonomic Support for Remote Employees Program can borrow furniture and equipment from the [Ergonomic Lending Library](#) to help confirm fit and comfort before making a purchase.