ebook

Working from home

Creating your home workspace

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If you do a lot of work sitting in front of your computer screen at home, it is important to think of your physical well-being. Creating a good home workspace can help.

In this eBook, we show you various ways in which you can optimise your own situation.

Let's kick off with the most important advice: **get up and move around regularly!** Even if you have created the perfect workspace and your working posture is the best it could possibly be, it is still vitally important for you to have regular exercise. It is of even greater importance if your workspace and posture are not optimal. So:
- go for a walk at lunchtime;
- every thirty minutes, get up and walk around for at least a minute, making sure you move your arms as well;
- every ten minutes, move your neck, arms and back but remain seated (micro-breaks).

Another tip: **variety is the spice of life!**
This also applies to your daily activities:
- put a wash on, do some clearing up;
- vary your sitting position: sit up straight for a while and then relax into the backrest of your chair;
- exchange your chair for a stool;
- get up and walk around when you are on the phone.

The following scenarios will be dealt with in this eBook:
1. You work at a desk and have an adjustable office chair and a desktop computer;
2. You work on a laptop;
3. You do not have an adjustable desk (table);
4. You do not have an adjustable office chair;
5. You work on a tablet.
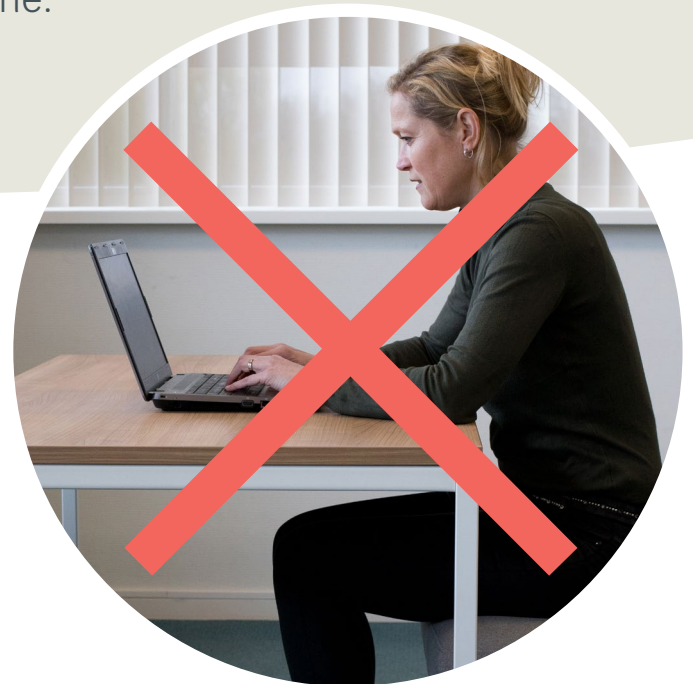
# 1. Desk, adjustable office chair and desktop computer

This is the best scenario. Below you will find instructions on how to set up your workspace. In addition, look carefully at the instructions that came with the office chair, especially the ones that explain how the controls work. A chair that is adjusted correctly will give your body the optimal support it needs. Unfortunately, this is not a guarantee for avoiding physical aches and pains. It is just as important, therefore, to change your working position from time to time, to take regular exercise, and to vary your daily activities.
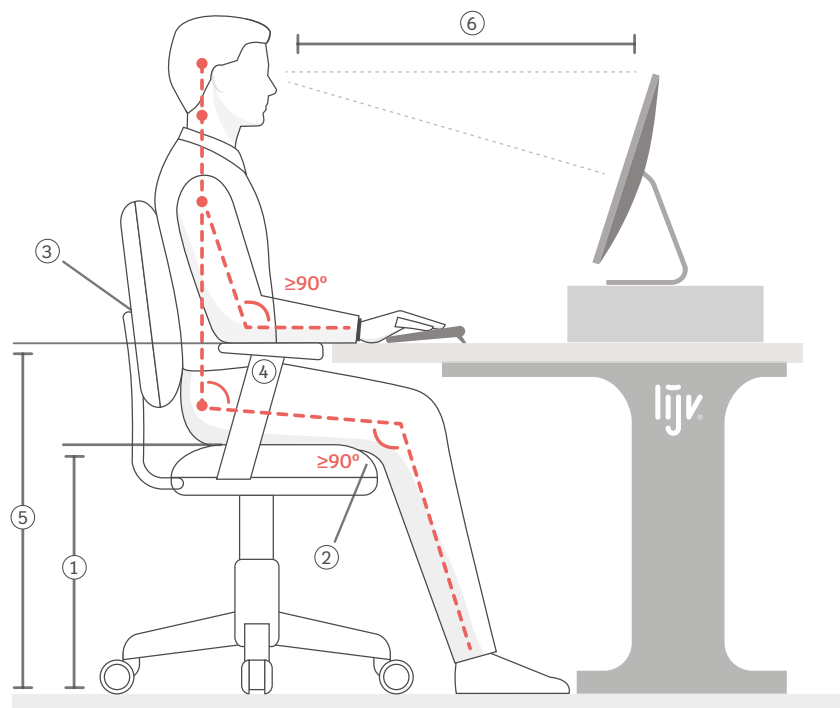
Chair (normal position)

1. Adjust the height of the seat so that your feet are firmly on the ground and your upper legs are straight;
2. Adjust the depth of the seat so that a clenched fist fits between the back of your knee and the seat.
3. Adjust the backrest (lumbar support) so that it supports your lower back. The curve of the backrest should fit the hollow in your lower back. Use the adjustable controls for backrest and seat if your chair has them. Adjust the counter-pressure of the backrest taking your body weight into account.
4. Sit upright with your arms hanging loosely by your sides, relax your shoulders, bend your elbows at a right angle of 100 degrees. Adjust the height and breadth of the armrests so that the undersides of your arms are supported, and your shoulders are relaxed as you work.

1. Desk, adjustable office chair and desktop computer
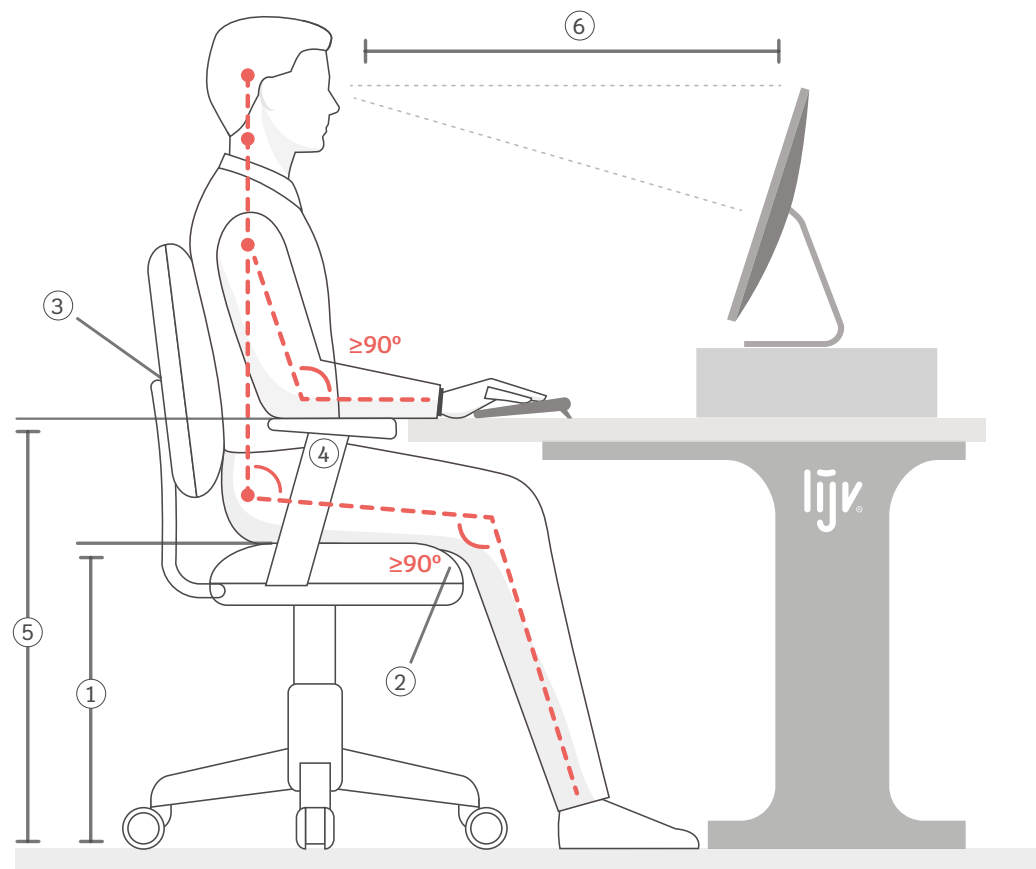
Desk

5. Adjust the height of your desk to the height of the armrests (and not the other way around) so that the surface of the desk becomes an extension of the armrests. A footrest is only necessary if you are unable to adjust the height of the working surface to the height of the armrests.

Monitor, keyboard and mouse

6. Place the monitor in front of you:
   - the top edge of the monitor should be at eye-level, MAXIMUM (10-15 cm; lower is also permitted);
   - eye-distance for a 19-inch monitor should be between 60 and 80 cm;
   - position monitor at right angles to light source.
7. Place the keyboard in front of you at lower arm's length and place the mouse next to the keyboard.
8. Keep the feet of your keyboard folded in to ensure that your wrists are in a neutral position above the keyboard.

2. You work on a laptop

The advice is crystal clear: do not work for more than two hours a day on your laptop. If you need to work for longer, there are various options to consider:

1. Connect your laptop to a **separate monitor, mouse and keyboard**. Now you have a larger screen surface that reduces eyestrain and enhances productivity. Proceed further with the steps as described on pages 3 and 4.

2. Use a **laptop stand** which raises your screen to the required height. This option also means that you work with a **separate keyboard** and **mouse**, which is ergonomically better for you.

3. Place a **pile of books** or a sturdy box under your laptop making sure that the screen is at the required height. Once again, connect your laptop to a **separate keyboard and mouse.**

1.

2.

3.

(60-80 cm)
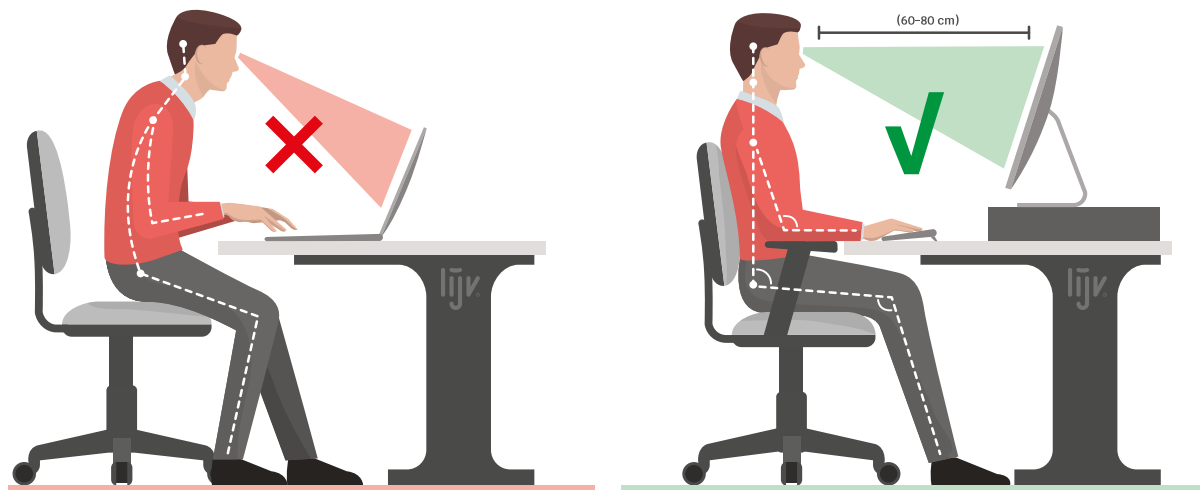
3. You do not have an adjustable desk (table)

It is important that your legs and back are well supported and that your shoulders are relaxed.

If your table is too high:
Adjust the height of your chair so that the undersides of your arms are resting on the table or armrests and your shoulders are relaxed. If necessary, place a footrest (or a sturdy box or piece of wood) under your feet.

If your table is too low:
This is problematic. The only solution is to put furniture raisers under the table legs to bring it up to the required height.

4. You do not have an adjustable office chair

It is important that your legs and back and well supported. If the table is too high, put a cushion on the seat of your chair and put a small cushion or rolled up towel in the hollow of your lower back (lumbar support). Use a footrest.

Vary your sitting position
Choose for a more active sitting position from time to time. Sit up high (slightly higher than the advised height on page 3) so that you are sitting more on the edge of your chair or stool and you no longer need the footrest.

Active sitting position: you are now sitting on the edge of your chair and you no longer need the footrest.

5. You work on a tablet

A tablet is basically not meant to be used for intensive screen work. It can be used for checking work done or looking something up but not really for work that involves a lot of typing. So, make sure you have either a desktop computer or a laptop and use them as advised in the previous pages.