



Technology and ergonomics

A guide for parents



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How to prevent health risks

Most of us live and breathe the online world — there are few who aren't connected using at least one device.

But with the need for flexibility now one of the most important aspects of today's devices, we often forget about fact we should use technology in ways that are ergonomically correct.

Failing to use devices or arrange your work space correctly can increase health risks, such as bad posture, eye strain, back and neck pain, and pain in the extremities.

This guide is designed as a quick reference resource for parents as a way of minimising the chances of these things happening to their children. It provides strategies that are widely recognised to assist with the safe use of technology in the home.

Maintain good posture

While using a device at a desk, ensure your:

- feet are rested firmly on the floor or footpad; legs are supported firmly by an appropriate chair
- lower back is supported by the chairs backrest
- elbows, hips and knees are bent at approximately 90-degrees
- shoulders are relaxed and forearms are parallel to floor
- wrists are straight, neck is relaxed and chin is not poking upwards.



Image from: *Ergonomic Guide to Computer-based workstations*

Avoid bad posture

Ensure you do not do the following while using a device:

- lie on your back or side
- sit on a bed or on the floor
- kneel
- sit cross-legged
- lean against a wall
- slouch while seated.

Screen position

When sitting at a desk, your monitor should be positioned directly in front of you and approximately an arms-length away. Your fingertips should be just touching the monitor and the top of it should be at eye-level or slightly below.

Ensure good lighting

When using a device to complete any work, ensure your lighting is adequate. The angle of your device and nearby lighting sources should be adjusted to prevent glare and reflection.

Take regular breaks

It is important you take regular breaks from your device — five minutes every 30 minutes. During this time, make sure you rest your hands, arms, and your eyes. This can be done by giving your eyes something different to look at and adjusting your focal length, such as looking out the window.

Remember to exercise

Take longer breaks every 30–60 minutes to get up, walk around, and do exercises or another task to move your body, stretch and increase blood circulation.

Limit noise

Using headphones at high volume for long periods of time can potentially damage your hearing. When listening to music or other media, it is recommended that you limit exposure and keep the sound-level at no more than 60 per cent of the maximum

volume. Child-friendly earphones and ear buds are now available and have a 'built-in' volume-limiting device.

Limit entertainment screen time

International research recommends the use of electronic media, for entertainment purposes, should be limited to no more than two hours a day. Higher levels have been associated with various health risks.

Please note, if your child experiences ongoing discomfort or pain that is not eliminated by the strategies suggested in this document, please seek medical advice.

Reference list

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