



Universiteit
Leiden



An ergonomic workplace

In the ideal ergonomic office, you can work at ease and are able to concentrate, in a comfortable climate with good lighting, behind an adjustable desk and on an adjustable office chair. At the desk there is a desktop computer or a laptop with a separate screen and/or a separate keyboard and mouse.

Office chair and desk

Office chair

- The correct height of your chair allows you to sit with your legs at an angle of 90 degrees approximately with your feet flat on the floor.
- A good seat depth gives your upper legs enough support and leaves enough room between the seat and the back of your knees. This should be a space of approximately 3 finger widths.
- A good height for the armrest ensures that the upper arm makes an angle of 90 degrees with your forearm while your shoulders are neither hunched up or slouched down. The distance between the armrests should not be too wide. If this is the case then you will essentially be lifting your arms which will cause later complaints.
- The height of the backrest is such that your back is supported by the curve in the backrest i.e. the curve is next to the edge of your pelvis.
- For *active sitting*, the backrest is set to a rocking motion and after that the intensity of the movement needs to be adapted to your posture. If the setting is too strong, it will feel as if you are training your core muscles all day and if it is too weak, you will feel like you are flipping backwards when taking a seat.
- If you dislike active sitting, the chair can be secured in various positions. It is advised however to not stay in one position all day long.

Desk

- In the case of an adjustable desk, the best height for your tabletop is the same height as your armrests.
- If you prefer to use the desk as support, with the armrests under the tabletop, first install the desk as described above and then lower the armrests.

- In the case of a nonadjustable desk and if the tabletop is too high for your posture, using a footrest is a good solution. A footrest can also be useful in case of leg complaints.
- The height described above is for working behind the computer. For reading books or from paper this height is too low and in that case you can use a document holder. This holder is placed between the keyboard and the screen in such a way that the documents on it do not cover any part of the screen.
- Natural/daylight will raise productivity. However, it is important to prevent the sun being positioned in your back or right behind your screen. Should this be the case, the use of blinds is advised.

Desktop and laptop

Desktop

- The position of the screen is such that your stretched arm fits between you and the screen (between 50-70 cm). If you have to move the screen further away or closer to be able to read text, you possibly need computer screen glasses or reading glasses.
- The height of the screen is such that you just are not able to look over the top of it. If the screen is too high, causing you to tip back your head, this can cause neck complaints.
- If you have computer screen glasses or reading glasses, the height has to be such that the top of the screen is at the same height as the part of your glasses that you use to read.
- If you can't touch type, your screen has to be 10 cm lower to prevent straining your neck muscles by looking up and down all time.
- If your arms are resting on the armrest of your chair, the keyboard will then need to be at 10 to 15 cm distance from the edge of your desk. If you use the desk as an arm support, your keyboard will need to be 20 to 30 cm distance from the edge of your desk i.e., your elbows should be resting just off the edge of the table. In both cases, the legs of the keyboard are folded and the keyboard is sitting within shoulder width and between your body and the screen.
- The mouse should ideally be situated within your shoulder width and the cable needs to be long enough to easily move the mouse around. The mouse itself is big enough to have your hand resting on it while your wrist is touching the desk. When using the buttons, keep your fingers stretched outright. To prevent any hand or wrist complaints it is advised to set the mouse speed not too fast and use fast-key options on the keyboard as a replacement for using the mouse. For Microsoft fast-key options, [see the attachment](#).

Laptop

- Working at a laptop can cause complaints due to a bended posture.
- If you connect a separate mouse and keyboard to your laptop and put your laptop higher (top screen at eye height), your posture will be improved greatly.

Good to know

- The purchase of a laptop stand, a document holder, a separate keyboard or a mouse is possible through the secretary and/or your supervisor.
- The University has a computer screen glasses arrangement; after purchasing these glasses a (partial) reimbursement is possible. For the exact conditions, see this webpage on [allowances](#).
- There are multiple facilities you can arrange for working at home, see your [staff website](#).