



The ErgOHListic[®] Plan of Action

Practical strategies to prevent musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) at the workstation
(Structured into: Strategic | Technical | Organizational | Behavioural)

Strategic Level

(Long-term preventive decisions and mindset)

- Recognize MSDs as cumulative and preventable — most result from small, repeated overloads, not one-off incidents.
- Take action as soon as the grey zone appears — discomfort is a warning, not something to push through.
- Cultivate team-wide understanding of how the body works — consistency across colleagues builds a healthier environment.
- Position postural health as a professional skill — just like time management or communication, it supports performance and resilience.

 Working from Home: build intentional routines that distinguish work time from home life. Unstructured environments increase health risks unless proactively managed.

Technical Level

(Workstation setup, from the feet to the fingertips)

◆ Not sure where you stand? Start with the [free workplace self-assessment tool](#) — it provides personalized recommendations based on your actual setup.

- Heels under the knees
 - Adjust the chair height so your heels rest firmly on the floor, without any sense of compression or pressure in your hips.
 - If your hips feel jammed or compacted, the seat is likely too low — raise the chair. Use a footrest only if your feet no longer reach the floor afterward.
- Pelvic stabilization through the chair
 - Your belt must rest firmly against the backrest, so the chair supports your upper body weight.
 - If the seat pan is too deep, shorten it with a cushion or choose a model that allows adjustment.
- Desk surface at elbow height
 - The desk should be at elbow height, or slightly lower if using a thick keyboard.
 - This helps avoid shoulder tension and preserves wrist mobility.
- Compact keyboard
 - Keeps your arms close and reduces sideways reaching for the mouse.
 - Most people don't need a numpad — leave it aside unless it's essential.
- Vertical mouse
 - Supports a neutral hand and forearm position, minimizing tension over long work periods.



- Screen positioned with the top ~10° below eye level
 - Helps prevent neck flexion greater than 20°.
 - The screen tilt should be slightly positive, so that the screen faces you — not your chest.
 - Most people should lower their screen — not raise it.
- ♦ Laptop users: to place the screen at the right height and angle, you'll need an external keyboard and mouse. Without them, raising the laptop increases neck and shoulder strain.

1 Organizational Level

(Time structure, task planning, and workstation rhythm)

- Alternate between sitting and standing across the day
 - As a daily goal, aim to spend 50% of your work time sitting, and 50% standing or walking.
 - This includes formal standing work as well as informal movement (e.g., walking to talk, standing for phone calls, taking stairs).
- Stand up at least every 30 minutes
 - Even brief transitions matter — this helps redistribute mechanical load and limits muscular fatigue.
 - Use meetings, natural task changes, or reminders as prompts to stand or shift.
- Apply the 20/20/20 rule for visual strain
 - Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet (6 meters) away for 20 seconds.
 - This reduces eye fatigue, which often triggers forward head posture and slouching.
- Vary your tasks to vary your posture
 - Structure your day to alternate between screen work, calls, and off-screen reading.
 - Standing works well for admin, brainstorming, or video calls — use sitting strategically, not by default.
- Use software or routines to anchor pauses
 - Apps like Stretchly or Workrave can remind you to reset posture or take breaks.
 - Set triggers you'll actually respect — e.g., calendar alerts, or a specific recurring song.
- 🏠 Working from home:
 - Anchor breaks to everyday actions: brew coffee, unload the dishwasher, or water a plant.
 - This creates natural movement without adding screen time and reinforces body-awareness in familiar routines.



Behavioural Level

Body awareness, posture habits, and self-management

- Sit all the way back into the chair
 - Let the chair carry your upper body weight at the belt line.
 - Avoid perching, leaning forward, or hovering above the backrest.
- Ground your sitting on your sit bones
 - Tilt your pelvis slightly forward until you feel pressure under the sit bones, not the tailbone.
 - This supports spinal decompression without requiring muscle tension.
- Let your neck relax
 - A relaxed neck is a consequence, not a command.
 - Look for strain triggers: screen too low or too high, elevated shoulders, forward reach, or leaning on your forearms.
- Float your arms over the desk
 - Avoid leaning your forearms — it loads the neck and limits elbow movement.
 - When the shoulder blades are naturally well-positioned, the arms can move freely without tension.
- Use discomfort as a signal, not a failure
 - Some strain is inevitable — gravity, stress, and screens are part of life.
 - The key is learning to recognize when the glass is filling up.
 - ◆ To “empty the glass,” try the [Upper Body Reset](#) — a quick way to release accumulated tension.
- Adjust posture every 20–30 minutes
 - Small mechanical tune-ups: recheck your seat contact, screen angle, neck tension, or arm position.
 - These prevent buildup — they’re not about stretching, just staying calibrated.
- Anchor posture rituals to your day
 - Link them to repeatable cues like brushing teeth, joining meetings, or opening emails.
 - Over time, these rituals become automatic.
- Want to go deeper?
 - Learn how to use your body step by step with the [Posture Academy](#).

◆ Resources

- Self-assessment tool: <https://ergoh-conseil.typeform.com/self-assessment>
- Upper Body Reset: <https://youtu.be/WIP2kLZeH5w?feature=shared>
- Posture Academy: <https://oliviergirard.ch/en/posture-academy-online-program/>