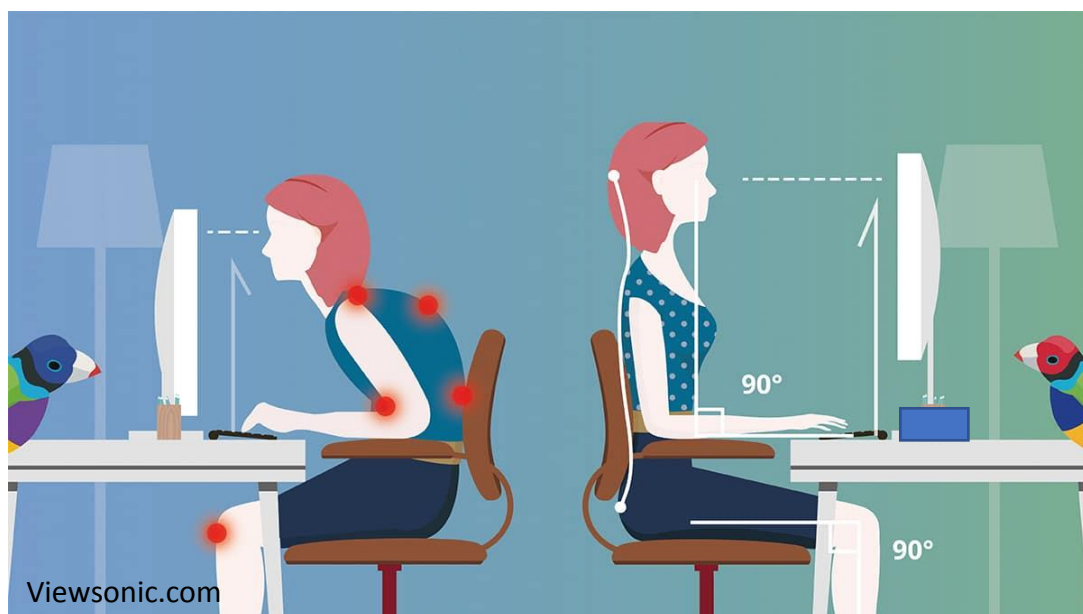


Safe Use of Computers for Children

In these unusual times, where many children are using computers more for remote schooling, leisure and socialisation, we should consider risks associated with using computers and have controls in place to reduce this where we can. The principles of ergonomics apply to children, as much as adults, if not more so, as children are growing and developing.

1. Screen Height:

- If you are using a laptop and notice that your child is bending or stooping to see the screen because it is fixed to the keyboard, then having a separate keyboard or mouse might help. (This issue is often more applicable with older, taller children). The laptop could be put onto a docking station to raise it up, but if you do not have access to this, then raising the screen using a stack of (stable) books or a box could help. Remember to ensure that they are sturdy. You are aiming for your child to be looking directly across at the top third of the screen (see diagram below).



2. Preventing Aches and Pains:

- If you do not have an adjustable office chair for your child to work on, the next best solution would be to get them to do their remote learning at the kitchen or dining table using a chair with a good back support. A sofa or sitting in bed does not provide good support or allow a good posture to be achieved. Cushions, or for younger children a booster cushion, can help to raise a child to a position where they can work at the table and have a 90:90:90 angles (see pictures).

- If a child's legs are dangling and feet are not flat on the floor when sitting at the table, a footrest or step-up stool could help. Alternatively, anything that can produce the same affect and is strong and stable will help.
- Cushions behind a child can also help them to achieve an upright sitting position. Sitting upright at a table, rather than relaxing on the sofa will help to promote a 'Ready for Learning' attitude.



- Stretching and moving will help your child not to get stiff, will relieve boredom, promote mental attitude and increase concentration.

3. Preventing Eye Strain:

- Having adequate lighting can help immensely with preventing eye strain. In these winter months, a desk lamp, is useful if there is inadequate natural lighting. An LED bulb is better. Position so as not to cause glare.
- Having rest breaks is important. Set a timer if necessary. Every 20 minutes follow the 20:20:20 rule – i.e. every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Having rest

breaks will not only prevent dry, red, sore eyes, headaches and fatigue, but generally children find it hard to concentrate for long periods of time.



- Another way to prevent sore eyes, is to restrict screen time. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommend that one hour a day of screen time is acceptable for pre-schoolers. Primary school can have 1 – 1.5 hours of screen time daily and those aged 11 – 13 years, up to 2 hours per a day. Adults should set a good example to their children regarding use of leisure screen time. Replace leisure screen-time with family time, such as trips to the park or cycling. <https://www.eyepromise.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Screentime-Recommendation-Chart-Final AAP-WHO.pdf>

4. Other tips:

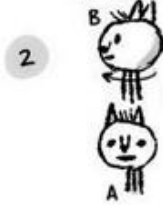
- Remove tripping hazards (e.g. toys that are lying around)
- Ensure that the computer and any electrical equipment are visually in a good condition (e.g no exposed wires, damaged sockets).
- Do not overload sockets <https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/safety-around-the-home/overloading-sockets/>
- Designate a schoolwork area, where your child gets into the mindset for completing their schoolwork.

5. Exercises:

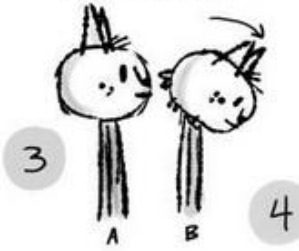
NECK STRETCH



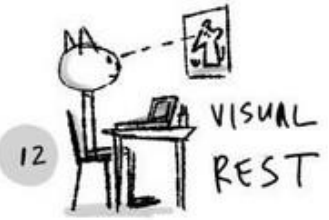
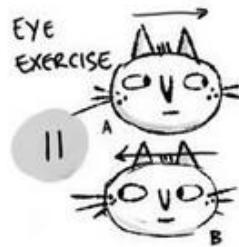
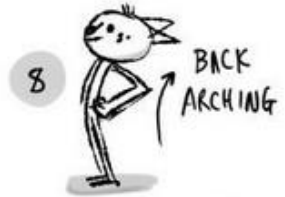
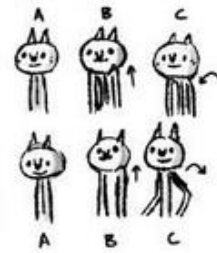
HEAD TURNS



CHIN TUCKS



SHOULDER ROLLS



Pinterest.com