

Ergonomic best practice: How to take the pain out of working from home

BIRMINGHAM, UK - The last five years has seen the number of people who work from home increase by 25%, with more than 8 million employees now working at least one day a week from home¹. This growth means the working environment is changing rapidly. Employers need to be aware of this shift away from conventional offices, and take steps to ensure that their employees stay healthy wherever they work.



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BHSF's recent survey with home workers highlighted an issue that requires the immediate attention of employers. Over a third of employees (37%) who work at home at least two days a week reported suffering new back pain since working from home. Even more worryingly, 58% of employees said they had received no help or guidance from their employers about how to set up their workstation at home. These figures indicate a significant problem that employers should address now, in order to prevent these pains from becoming serious long-term problems.

To help employers look after the musculoskeletal health of their remote workers, BHSF has created a free practical guide that includes tips on:

- How to set up an ergonomic workstation
- Suggested equipment for home workers
- Separating work and home life
- Movement and exercise
- Maintaining a close connection between office and home workers

BHSF has also created a handy posture guide to be shared with employees, so that they are aware of protecting their own musculoskeletal health when working remotely. These guides can be downloaded from

www.bhsfoh.co.uk/musculoskeletal_guides

Stuart Nottingham, physiotherapy lead for BHSF, said: “While some employers are doing an excellent job providing ergonomic assessments in person and revisiting these biannually, the majority are failing their employees badly on this issue.”

Dr Philip McCrea, Chief Medical Officer at BHSF, said: “As the trend towards home working accelerates, this lack of ergonomic support from employers could lead to serious consequences for the musculoskeletal health of home workers. If the problem is ignored, employers can expect to see increased levels of sickness absence.

“We want to work with employers to tackle this issue head-on by providing useful, practical advice that is simple to implement and has a significant positive impact on home workers.”

BHSF research conducted by OnePoll with 897 UK employees who work at least two days a week from home.

1. Virgin Media study of 2,006 employees, 2017

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