

# How to stay healthy while working from home



**Damian McClelland:** Clinical Director for Musculoskeletal Services

## Hurting from home? You're not alone.

**When social distancing measures were introduced many workers were thrust into working from home to keep them safe, with little time to prepare their workspaces.** But often this means hunching over kitchen tables, slumping in armchairs or even reclining in bed, using smaller screens and without headsets.

And this has taken its toll on our musculoskeletal health; new research from Bupa UK Insurance shows that 11 million Brits are already in back, neck or hip pain from their home working set up. But with working from home likely to be part of the 'new normal', Bupa's Clinical Director for Musculoskeletal Services, Damian McClelland is advising on how to make small changes **to reduce the risk of pain or long-term injury.**

So what sort of home worker are you? **Here's how you can avoid hurting from home.**



## Got the hump

One in four home workers sit hunched over a laptop or computer, but this can cause pain and stiffness in your back, shoulders and neck.

**Damian says:** Try to ensure your monitor is at least an arm's length away from you and the top of the monitor is at eye level – stack your laptop on some thick books for a quick fix.



## Still as a statue

One in three of us sit still for long periods of time while working from home. But this can cause stiffness and muscle pain.

**Damian says:** Try to break more regularly (ideally every 20 – 30 minutes) than you would in an office as this gives some muscles the chance to rest while others do the work.



## The sofa slouch

Many people slouch on a sofa or bed to work, but this can cause back pain due to lack of support – both in your lower and upper back – and your neck is likely to be at an odd angle too.

**Damian says:** Try to use a chair that has more support for your lower back, allowing you to keep your back and head aligned as you work.



## Doing the twist

Laptops may be portable, but balancing them at odd angles can lead to back, neck and shoulder pain.

**Damian says:** It's best to keep your computer in a position that's directly in front of you, with the screen at eye level and so that your wrists are supported too.



## The shoulder shrug

With colleagues spread out around the country, many of us are finding that we're spending more time on the phone. But using a mobile or landline phone without a headset is likely to strain the muscles in your neck.

**Damian says:** Try to use a hands-free phone line and avoid typing/writing with a phone between your ear and shoulder, as this can lead to neck problems.



## The dangler

When working from an armchair or sofa the temptation can be to curl your legs up under you, but if your legs aren't able to balance on the floor this can cause hip and back pain.

**Damian says:** Try to sit in a chair where your feet can reach the floor. If it's too high, use a couple of books or a box to rest on.



For more advice on how to avoid pain and injuries while working from home, visit Bupa UK where there are advice, tips and exercises including yoga that can be done from your desk [bupa.co.uk/coronavirus](https://bupa.co.uk/coronavirus).

For those worried about their musculoskeletal health, Bupa's Direct Access: MSK is a self-referral service which gives health insurance customers access to musculoskeletal specialists, without needing a GP referral.