

Working from home



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Introduction

The requirements during the coronavirus (COVID-19) disruption is for all staff to work from home. To help you, take a read of our guide on how to make the most of working from home, which is grounded on good common sense.

This guidance covers laptop, or paper-based work from an employee's home.

Working at home, either on a laptop, or carrying out paper-based work is a low risk activity. This type of working pattern can offer a range of potential benefits, but there are also associated hazards.

These include:

Working in isolation (wellbeing, stress or personal safety and accidents);

Lack of control over the work environment (DSE, fire safety and electrical safety).



Find a safe working environment

Ideally, one that allows you to work at your best wherever that might be in your home. Your workstation should include a desk or table, chair and laptop.



Setting up your workstation

Key points for Display Screen Equipment (DSE) working include:

- Adjust your chair and screen so they are in a comfortable position for your work;
- Ensure you have enough room for your documents and work equipment;
- Position your screen to avoid glare or reflections, or adjust blinds;
- Ensure the space under your work area is clear so you can move your legs about;
- Try to keep your wrists straight when keying
- Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen so you can clearly read your work;
- Take regular breaks from screen work. A short break from the screen (5 minutes every hour) is more beneficial than longer breaks at less frequent intervals.



If you are working remotely it may seem easier to simply open the laptop and start working without making any adjustments. However, this can lead to poor posture which can cause pain and discomfort over time.



Using your laptop remotely

Key points for working on a laptop remotely include:

- Try to raise the screen to eye level. This can be done using an adjustable laptop stand, box or some books if necessary;
- If you have a separate keyboard and mouse, ensure they are positioned close to your laptop to prevent over-reaching;
- Adjust your chair height if possible, your arms should be at right angles, with forearms lightly supported by the work surface;
- Make sure your lower back is well supported, which will help encourage good posture. You can use a folded towel to give you more support or consider a back-support cushion if needed;



Using your laptop remotely

Key points continued

- Take regular, short breaks:
 - Move around for five or ten minutes every hour, aiming for frequent, short breaks;
 - Consider taking microbreaks to stretch and move around. Change activity by taking a phone call or do some reading. Perhaps get a drink to avoid prolonged static postures;
 - Take more frequent breaks if your DSE setup is not optimal or if you are experiencing discomfort;

Try to avoid:

- Using phones or tablets for a long time;
- Sitting on unsupportive seating;
- Static postures.





As we adopt new working practices, we need to ensure we remain vigilant with Information Security.

Protecting information from unauthorised access, use, disclosure, and modification, either maliciously or accidentally, can have reputational, regulatory and legal consequences.



Information Security

Do's

Please continue to act responsibly and follow our good practise guidelines:

- Do save all documents in your Network drive location and not directly to the hard disk of your laptop – this will ensure your data remains secure and backed up;
- Do delete any emails received from unknown senders or any emails that look suspicious;
- Do delete any SMS or Whatsapp messages from unknown senders or messages that look suspicious;
- Do keep you password secure - When changing please ensure you use a strong password (a combination of uppercase, lowercase, numbers and special characters);
- Do ensure your laptop is regularly connected to the network so it can receive important software and Anti-Virus updates.



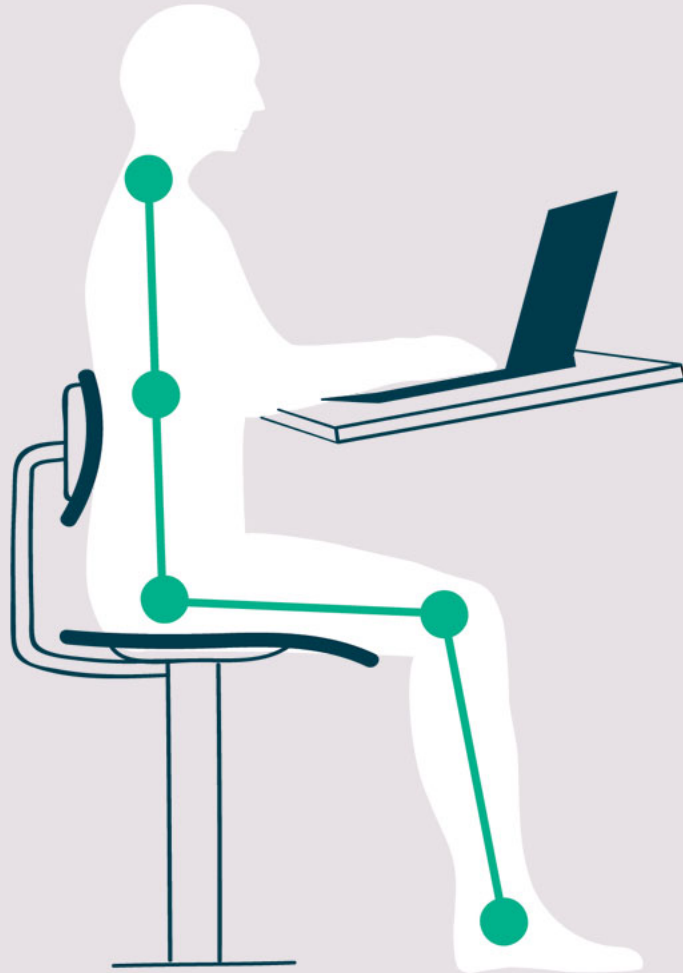
Information Security

Don'ts

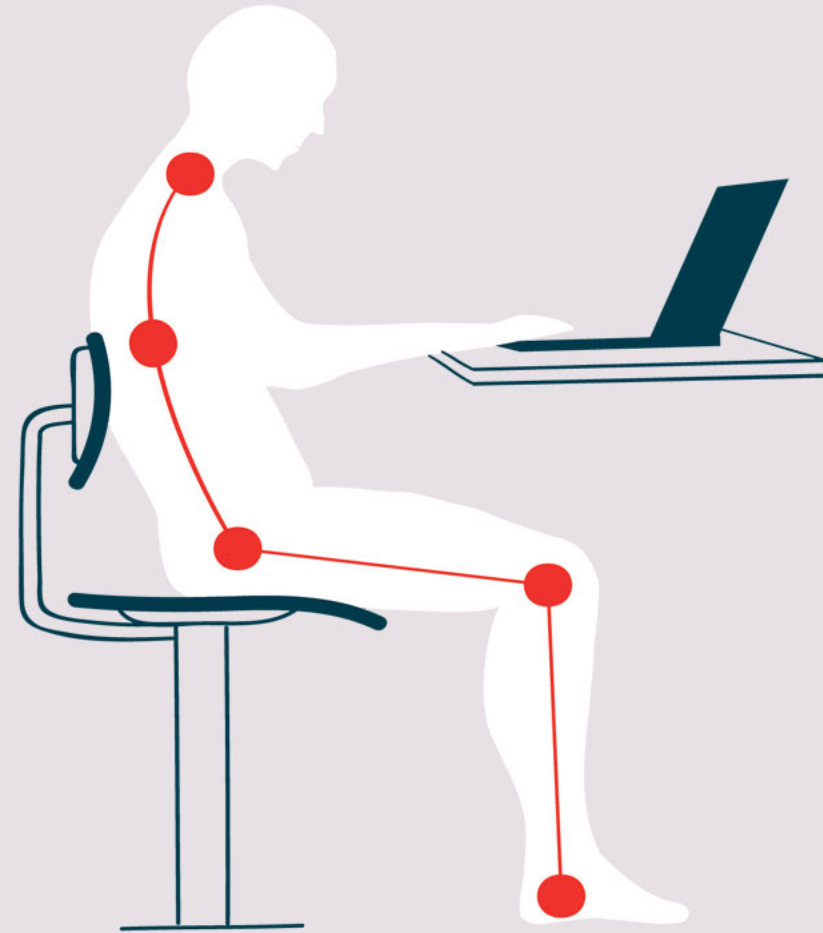
- Don't attempt to install any unauthorised software onto your laptop;
- Don't leave your laptop unlocked or unattended in public spaces;
- Don't disclose your login id or password to anyone and do not include username or passwords in emails.



Your posture



correct



incorrect



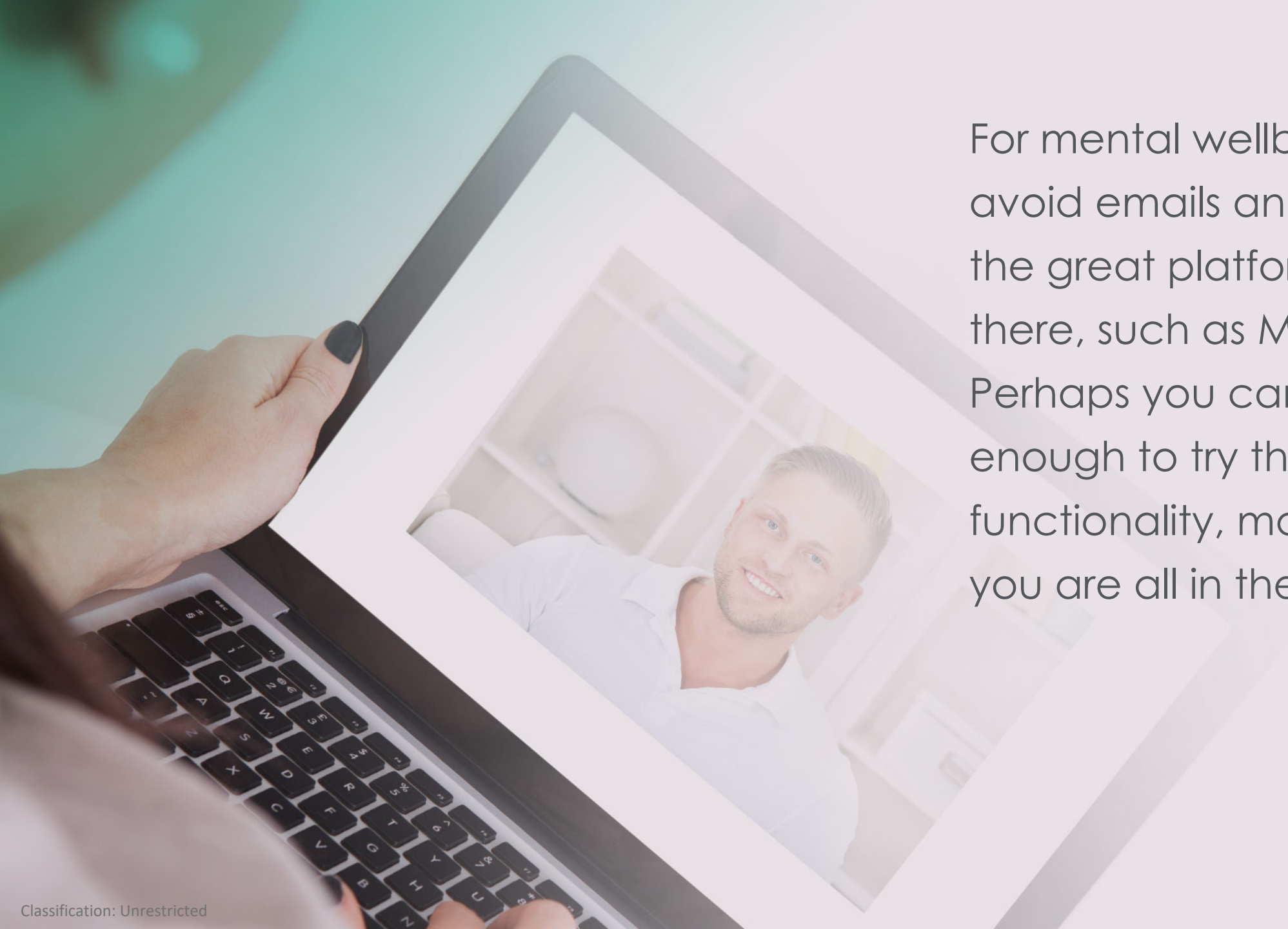
Roles and responsibilities of line managers and supervisors

Make sure you are clear in setting direction, objectives, and outcomes.

Check back with your people to confirm their understanding of what is being asked.

- Ensure there is adequate contact and communication with home workers;
- Ensure risks associated with home working are controlled.



A hand with dark nail polish holds a tablet computer. The tablet screen shows a video call with a smiling man in a white shirt. The background of the slide is a blurred office setting with a laptop keyboard visible in the bottom left corner.

For mental wellbeing try to avoid emails and use some of the great platforms that are out there, such as Microsoft Teams. Perhaps you can be brave enough to try the video functionality, making it feel like you are all in the office!



Mental wellbeing

It's important to maintain good communication with remote workers to minimise feelings of isolation. For mental wellbeing and a healthy balance of interaction consider:

- Regular team meetings between workers and their line managers. One-to-one staff interaction, which can be online (audio or video) or, by telephone;
- Follow IT guidance for dealing with software problems and equipment failure;
- Ensure you are regularly updated with the latest company communications, business and team news;
- Try to select different areas of your home to work from to vary scenery (this can include working outside in the garden).



Accountability and routine

It is probably worthwhile writing down a to-do list at the beginning of each day to keep yourself accountable.

Look at it as the day goes on, and at the end of the day, you'll see all the tasks you've crossed off, feeling accomplished. Or, more likely, what has come in and diverted you!

By following the same routine you implement (or imitate it closely) your typical working day. This means you can maintain the mental association you have when going to the office.



Why not try taking a break from your work by having a virtual coffee with your team for short intervals?

Managers, think about putting in a daily huddle to chat about non work matters. It's important to keep that team dynamic going.



Virtual coffee

Working in the office allows you to socialise with colleagues both within and outside of your team. We spend a big chunk of our lives at work, and so it's no surprise that you form deep, authentic relationships with your colleagues (some more than others).

When we work from home, we aren't likely to socialise with our colleagues as much as we would in the office, and this can be isolating.

Why not try taking a break from your work by having a virtual coffee with your team for short intervals? Simply checking in on platforms such as Microsoft Teams to see how everyone is doing gives you some much-needed socialising.



Time management

A key advantage of working from home is that you cut out the time it takes for you to commute to the office. You have options here. For those that live further afield, waking up slightly later can do the world of good. If you're a natural early bird, then consider waking up at the same time but logging-on if your work allows (and then off for home time) slightly earlier. Play to your natural strengths.

That covers our guide to making the most of working from home. Thanks for taking the time to read it. Take care and stay safe.

