

Standing Workstation Guidelines

Owner: Manager, Health, Wellbeing and Safety

Last Update: 26 February 2016

Introduction

Standing workstations allow you to change between sitting and standing while at work. This can contribute to reducing your overall sedentary postures during the day. Standing workstations can provide relief from long periods of sedentary postures.

Sedentary postures have been linked to an increased risk to some cancers, diabetes and poor heart health. In addition, seated postures in combination with poor working postures and poor general health can create an increased risk of developing musculoskeletal disorders.

However, don't rush out and buy a sit/stand workstation. Prolonged standing can lead to sore feet, poor circulation, swelling in the feet and lower limbs and leg fatigue amongst other things.

A standing work station is one of a range of strategies that can be implemented to increase mobility, vary musculoskeletal postures and reduce the risk of poor heart health and diabetes. Other activities include:

- undertaking regular exercise and maintaining good physical health outside of work
- eating a healthy and nutritious diet
- using the stairs instead of the lift
- walking meetings
- walking to get a glass of water
- walking to a printer further away from your desk
- checking your mobile phone while standing or standing when talking on the phone
- walking to a colleague's desk rather than email or calling
- using a Bluetooth headset to take a phone call whilst standing or slowly walking /pacing
- having a standing meeting or conversation at locations that enable standing. This might be at a room with benches and no chairs, a kitchen, canteen or anywhere with a bench.
- encouraging colleagues to be part of this new way of working
- ensuring you get outside during lunch breaks
- as a team consider changing meetings to 50 minutes allowing 5 minutes before and after for walking, standing, stretching
- Installing a standing hot desk so everyone can trial the equipment.
- The Department of Health "Physical Activity Guidelines for Adult Australians" recommends doing any physical activity is better than doing none. If you currently do no physical activity, start by doing some, and gradually build up to the recommended amount; be active on most, preferably all, days every week; accumulate 150 to 300 minutes (2 ½ to 5 hours) of moderate intensity physical activity or 75 to 150 minutes (1 ¼ to 2 ½ hours) of vigorous intensity physical activity, or an equivalent combination of both moderate and vigorous activities, each week; do muscle strengthening activities on at least 2 days each week.

Factors to consider when choosing a workstation?

When deciding on a workstation you should consider the:

- work tasks that will be performed
- design of the sit/stand workstation including ease of use, adjustability and dimensions
- existing office layout and furniture - physical limitations in the space
- availability of computer ports and electrical sockets
- privacy and confidentiality.

Standing Workstation Guidelines

Sit/stand workstations generally fall into two categories:

- full desk —the whole workstation can be raised or lowered to suit both sitting and standing positions. This is the best option as it provides access to all the items on the desk without the need for stooping.
- desk top style—a separate unit is positioned on top of the non-adjustable desktop.

Comparison of sit/stand workstation options		
	Full Desk	Desk top unit
What is it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whole desk that can be adjusted to suit standing or sitting • can be relocated (sometimes limited by existing office layout configuration) • ideal for refurbishments • Supplier usually able to provide quality assurance documentation and compliance to Australian Standard or comparable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a platform that sits on an existing desk and supports hardware for computer workstation i.e. monitors, keyboard and mouse. Needs to have sufficient capacity to provide stability and take the weight of all hardware including double monitors • fitted using a desk mount or leg attachments and may require adequate space behind the desk for mounting • usually a cheaper option, can be used on desks where dimensions are suitable • easier to relocate to another desk however can be heavy • Difficult to identify Australian Standard Certification for quality and safety purposes
Work tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no limitation to work tasks • enables items such as phone, PC accessories, paperwork to be close at hand for your work at all times • able to support multiple screens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may have a limited work area i.e. only fit one monitor, keyboard and mouse • some are able to support two monitors with larger work surface or extra monitor supports
Posture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allows user to have their preferred posture in both sitting and standing positions • allows for forearm support to reduce strain on the neck and shoulders • check that the desk can be adjusted to suit shorter and taller workers when standing (it is recommended that the desktop be raised to at least 1200 mm from the floor to suit taller workers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some models result in a compromise between preferred sitting and standing postures (due to the nature of the table top design) • taller workers may not be able to position the monitor at their preferred height or distance away due to the limited depth of table top equipment • check there is adequate space for keyboard and unrestricted use of mouse • some models do not offer enough space for forearm support and others do not tolerate pressure from resting forearms • check that the total height of the desk and unit suits shorter and taller workers • some table tops still require raising the height of existing desks in order for taller workers to comfortably use • adjusting unit height may require awkward posture

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	Full Desk	Desk top unit
Ease of use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mechanical or electric operation to enable height adjustment available some models have programmable height settings and crush sensors to prevent risk injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> various methods including gripping/squeezing to adjust height of workstation (note some are stiffer and require notable force to adjust) the workstation can become very heavy to adjust with more items stored on it and increases the risk of injury - the larger the model the greater the risk use of a wireless keyboard and mouse avoids cords being caught in height adjustment mechanism stability can vary, some cannot tolerate resting forearms on the keyboard area while in the standing position some only allow computer based work in standing position check there is enough work space and room for the storage of desk items
Installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ability to fit an electric height adjusting mechanism to existing table top requires trained installer cost involved when removing old desk, packaging etc may require technical support to ensure computer cables extend the full height range of the desk when lifted electric models require power to operate May require redesign and reconfiguration of existing workspace resulting in additional costs to purchaser. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some models can be simply installed, others require a trained installer to assemble some models are portable but heavy to move around.
Costs (check warranty period)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> costs vary, some electric models are cheaper than table top models can reduce price if retaining existing desk surface and just installing the height adjustability mechanism check installation and delivery costs while a height adjustable desk model may be more expensive, the additional cost may be worth it given the functionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally cheaper check installation and delivery costs

Standing Workstation Guidelines

Training and awareness

Staff should be provided with instruction prior to the use of a sit/stand workstation. It is recommended that the training includes information about:

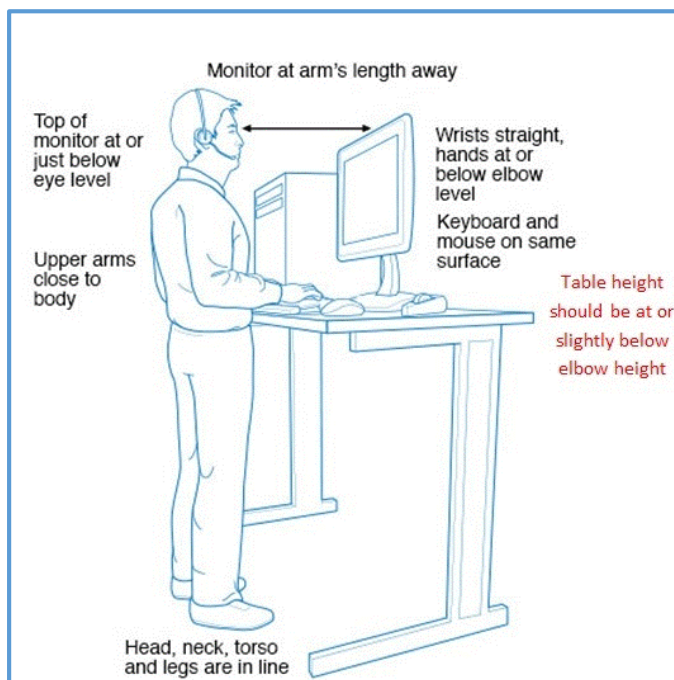
- how to adjust the workstation up to suit the worker's individual needs
- the health benefits of sitting less and moving more
- how to use the workstation safely and getting the most out of a sit/stand workstation (refer to Tips to get the most out of your sit/stand workstation below).

Preparing for a standing workstation

The following should be considered before a standing workstation is installed:

- How will a reasonable level of privacy be provided for adjacent sitting workstations
- If the standing workstation is powered, are there sufficient close-by power points so that leads are not a problem?

Simple Ergonomic set up of sit/stand workstations



Setting up a sit/stand workstation is similar to setting up a seated computer workstation. Adjust the workstation so that when standing or sitting:

- you are in a forward facing posture
 - the top of the desk surface (where keyboard and mouse are positioned) is at elbow height or just below
 - the keyboard is directly in front of you, push the keyboard back so that your forearms are supported on the front part of the desk when typing (touch typists may prefer to position the keyboard closer to them)
 - the keyboard and mouse can be comfortably used on the same level and close to each other
- your arm is close to your side when using the mouse
 - the monitor is positioned so that you do not tilt/arch your head back or twist your neck
 - the monitor is generally positioned at approximately arm's length or further away from you
 - the top of the screen is at your eye height or lower
 - the monitor height is slightly adjusted when standing to be visually comfortable while maintaining the correct posture
 - multiple monitors are set up correctly - orientate yourself so you are facing the screen most without prolonged twisting of the neck
 - In addition, use a document holder if you refer to documents when typing and check that it suits the workstation selected (keep all frequently used items within arm's reach).

Standing Workstation Guidelines

Get the most out of the sit/stand workstation

To make the most out of the sit/stand workstation remember to:

- regularly change postures between sitting, standing and moving, to avoid prolonged sitting or prolonged standing at your workstation
- listen to your body (especially if you experience discomfort or pain) and alternate between sitting, standing and moving
- seek medical advice from your health provider regarding and precautions for standing if you are pregnant, suffer from leg pain, varicose veins or have a pre-existing musculoskeletal problem such as lower back pain.
- start standing for short periods and gradually build up to longer standing periods over time
- consider the type of footwear worn - low heel and supportive is best (consider leaving a pair at work)
- when standing, position your chair to avoid creating a trip hazard for yourself or others
- set up the workstation so you are not directly overlooking your colleague when in the standing position, strategic use of dividers can assist in reducing the potential noise and visual changes that may occur when using the standing workstation.
- current guidelines for predominately desk based work suggest initially building up to two hours of standing and movement over the workday with a view to standing and moving as much as possible spread over the day (pro rata for part time hours). Anti-fatigue mats are generally not needed as carpet and underlay usually provides sufficient support. Mats can be a trip hazard for yourself or your colleagues or may cause strains or sprains when moving it to use your chair.

For more information:

- Contact the [HWS team](#) for advice about your specific needs. It is recommended that you trial the workstation prior to purchase if the supplier can accommodate this request.
- [Position Paper - Prolonged Unbroken Sitting - Human Factors Society Australia \(PDF\)](#)
- [Sedentary Work factsheet](#)
- [Ergonomic guide to computer based workstations](#)
- [Comparison of Sit Stand workstations](#)