Understanding simple ergonomic principles can allow adjustments to be made to your at home workstation simply by using common household items. Below are some creative ways to apply ergonomic principles at home:

**Chair Set Up**

Adjustable office chairs may not always be an option for your at home workstation. Here are some tips and tricks to make your non-adjustable chair more comfortable.

1. When sitting, shoulders should be relaxed, and elbows kept at a comfortable 90 degrees
   - Try placing a pillow or cushion on your seat to raise your chair height
   - Books can be placed below the table to raise the table to match your chair height

2. Knee angles should be at or around 90 degrees to maintain low back spine curvature
   - Make sure there is sufficient space under the desk for legs to comfortably fit
   - If feet cannot be supported while the knee is at 90 degrees, place footrest below to support feet. Try using textbooks, reams of paper, delivery boxes, foam roller, etc.

3. Lumbar (lower back) curvature should be supported to decrease spinal disc pressure
   - Try placing a small pillow or rolled up towel on the back of your chair to support your lower back curvature

**Table Set Up**

By having proper table set up it can prevent excessive reaching and working in awkward posture to reduce musculoskeletal injury risks.

1. Set up work zones for tools and equipment commonly used
   - In your **Primary Zone**, place tools that are critical for your work (i.e. keyboard, mouse, notebooks, etc.)
   - In your **Secondary Zone**, place objects that are only occasionally used such as your phone, beverage and snacks
   - In your **Reference Zone**, place objects that are infrequently used such as printers, files, etc.)

**Note:**
Humans are not meant to sit at one place for long periods of time. Consider taking stretch breaks every 25-30 minutes of work to prevent sedentary behaviour.
**Computer Set Up (Laptop and PC)**

Laptops are **not** designed for prolonged use unless you have an external keyboard and mouse. When setting up laptop, follow the steps below:

1. The top of your monitor screen should be at eye level (unless you have bifocal glasses or contacts, in which case the monitor should be placed below eye level)
   - A lap desk can be used to raise your monitor / laptop height
   - Stacks of textbooks or delivery boxes are a great alternative
2. Monitor should be arm’s length away
3. Because the monitor height is now adjusted, a keyboard and mouse extension are highly recommended so that elbows and wrists can remain in neutral position while typing and moussing

**Stand Up Desk Set Up**

Standing desks can be created with work surfaces already available in your home. Standing is a great way to vary your posture throughout the day. However, static standing is not much better from static sitting. Consider incorporating regular stretch breaks throughout the day to break up long periods of static posture.

1. When standing, shoulders should be relaxed, and elbows flexed at a comfortable 90 degrees
   - Kitchen islands, bedroom dressers could be the perfect height as your work surface
   - Lap desks, stools, and stacks of books can be a great way to raise your workstation surface as well
2. Neck should be kept neutral by raising monitor height
3. Wear comfortable shoes for support
4. Rotate between sitting and standing every 30-45 minutes
   - Standing at your workstation for long periods of time may induce fatigue and negatively affect your posture
**Microbreaks**

1. Take stretch breaks every 25-30 minutes for ~2 minutes
2. Follow the 20-20-20 rule to rest your eyes
   - Every 20 minutes, look at objects 20 yards away, for 20 seconds

Google Chrome has a great extension you can install that lets you know when you should take your next break.

[Link to extension here](#)

---

**Computer & Desk Stretches**

*Approximately 4 Minutes*

Sitting at a computer for long periods often causes neck and shoulder stiffness and occasionally lower back pain. Do these stretches every hour or so throughout the day, or whenever you feel stiff. Photocopy this and keep it in a drawer. Also, be sure to get up and walk around the office whenever you think of it. You'll feel better!

1. 10–20 seconds, 2 times
2. 10–15 seconds
3. 8–10 seconds each side
4. 15–20 seconds
5. 3–5 seconds, 3 times
6. 16–12 seconds each arm
7. 10 seconds
8. 10 seconds
9. 8–10 seconds each side
10. 8–10 seconds each side
11. 10–15 seconds, 2 times
12. Shake out hands, 5–10 seconds

*Stretching © 2020 by Bob and Jean Anderson, Shelter Publications, Inc.*