



EUROPEAN SAFETY WEEK

NATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY FUNCTION (NHSF) • 2023

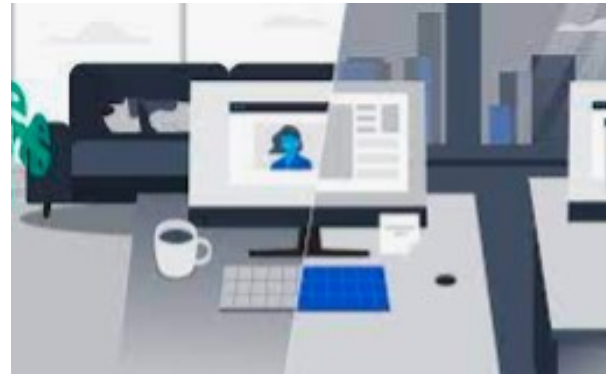
"SAFE & HEALTHY WORK IN THE DIGITAL AGE" CAMPAIGN 2023 - 2025

BLENDING WORKING - THE PRACTICALITIES

Regardless of where a workstation is, whether at a HSE premises or other work location, the same principles of correct Display Screen Equipment (DSE) workstation set-up apply. The objective is to achieve optimal ergonomics at your workstation.

In relation to blended working, the employee is required to identify a designated work space, which is suitable for the performance of their work duties. The line manager or designate must then carry out a remote working risk assessment of the employee's work environment and designated workstation in consultation with the employee. This risk assessment will help identify any changes which may be required in order to ensure the employee's safety and the outcomes will ultimately determine the suitability of the workspace.

If an employee is availing of blended working in their home they should (as far as is reasonably practicable and in line with funding availability), be equipped with a mobile device (e.g. laptop), separate keyboard/mouse, monitor and equipment (e.g. mobile phone) as agreed with their line manager. It is important to note that laptops are designed to be used for short periods of time and if in use, should be supplied with external equipment such as a separate mouse, monitor and keyboard, to enable you to set up your workstation properly and promote good working posture.



Am I a DSE User?

Are you a DSE user? Lets find out!

Do you....

- have no choice but to use DSE to carry out your work?
- normally use the DSE for continuous periods of more than one hour?
- use DSE equipment on a daily basis?

If the answer is yes to any of these, it is most likely that you are a DSE user.

DSE WORKSTATION

Why Setting up your DSE Workstation Correctly is so Important

Working with static/fixed posture or adopting poor posture for sustained periods of time is a risk factor that can contribute to developing musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). Poorly designed workstations can add to this risk. The importance of awareness, training, risk assessment and providing opportunities to take task breaks away from DSE activity cannot be underestimated.



Risk factors associated with working at a poorly designed DSE workstation

The health risks of working at a poorly designed DSE workstation may include:

- Musculoskeletal disorders (injuries and disorders affecting muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves, discs, and blood vessels)
- Repetitive strain injuries (carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis)
- Upper limb disorders (shoulders and neck)
- Back pain
- Visual fatigue
- Mental stress



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SETTING UP YOUR DSE CORRECTLY



Note: Laptops should not be used for long periods, without the addition of external equipment such as a separate mouse, monitor and keyboard, to aid optimal workstation setup.

When seated ensure the following:

1. Your back is straight and the lower back is supported by the back rest
2. Your thighs are parallel to the floor in a slightly downward position
3. Your feet are resting comfortably on the floor (if this is not possible, a footrest may be required)
4. Your forearms and wrists are in a straight line while typing, your shoulders are relaxed
5. Eyes are level with top of screen or slightly below eye level
6. The screen is approximately at arms length and is positioned to avoid reflective glare
7. Keyboard is directly in front of you with enough space to rest forwards on the desk between keyboard and desk edge

SIMPLE TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR WORKSPACE



Use your chair properly

Your chair is your most valuable asset when at your workstation. Adjust your chair so your feet are flat on the floor or foot stool and your lower back is fully supported.



Avoid Glare

Position desk lights to the side of the monitor, rather than behind or in front of.



Position your screen correctly

Your screen should be at least 20-30 inches from your face at eye height and tilted so the screen surface is perpendicular to your face.



Eye Breaks - Use the 20-20-20 Rule

Every 20 minutes, for 20 seconds focus on an object 20 feet away. This allows your eye muscles to rest.



Position your keyboard correctly

The keyboard should be placed directly in front of the screen. Adjust the height and angle of the keyboard. Your arms should be parallel with the floor.



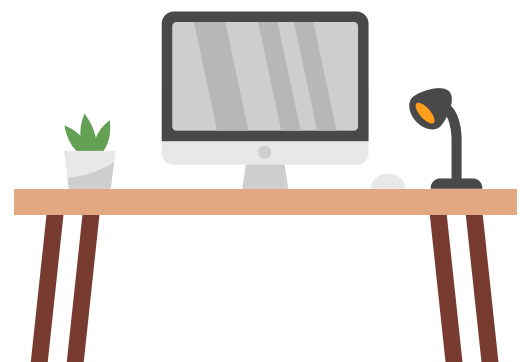
Vary your Position

Standing and stretching during your workday is good for your health.



Get Up and Move!

Take a short walk during your lunch break or send your print jobs to a further location. Change your posture frequently to minimise fatigue.





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RESPONSIBILITIES

What are the Employee and Manager's responsibilities in relation to DSE?

To ensure the safety of all DSE users, and to help and promote correct DSE workstation setup, there are a number of responsibilities that both DSE users and managers must do:



As a DSE User you must:

- take reasonable care of your safety, health and welfare
- complete the DSE user awareness module on [HSeLanD](#) and implement any changes highlighted in this training
- review your risk assessments and control measures to ensure they are effective
- introduce breaks in your activity so you can change posture and move
- report any defects in work equipment to your manager

As a Manager you must:

- identify any DSE users within your department or service
- undertake DSE Assessors module and general DSE awareness training on [HSeLanD](#)
- complete a DSE [risk assessment](#) for each user
- implement any control measures identified
- plan work activities to ensure breaks and changes in activities
- ensure staff complete the DSE User Awareness module

THE IMPORTANCE OF MOVEMENT

Get up and Move

DSE users tend to be sedentary for long periods of time while at work. Here are some simple tips to increase movement during the working day:

- Short frequent task breaks are physically more beneficial to the body than occasional longer breaks
- If you drive to work, park your car further away in the carpark
- Set a timer as a reminder to move
- Make your telephone calls standing up and pace the room
- Take the stairs, not the lift
- Why not send your documents to print to a device where you must walk to (consider GDPR requirements)
- Take a lunchtime walk with a friend
- Use a fitness tracker to count activity levels
- Avail of the free exercise programmes available on the [Health & Wellbeing webpages](#)



Taking a Break

You should plan your DSE work to allow for natural task rotation to occur. Task breaks have many benefits which allow your body to engage different muscle groups, increase blood flow to other parts of the body, decreasing fatigue and risk of injury. An example of a task break could include standing while taking a call/virtual meeting or walking to the printer. Ideally, the length of the task break should reflect the intensity of the work.

It is important regardless of where you are working that you take the breaks you are entitled to.

Have you taken a task break yet?

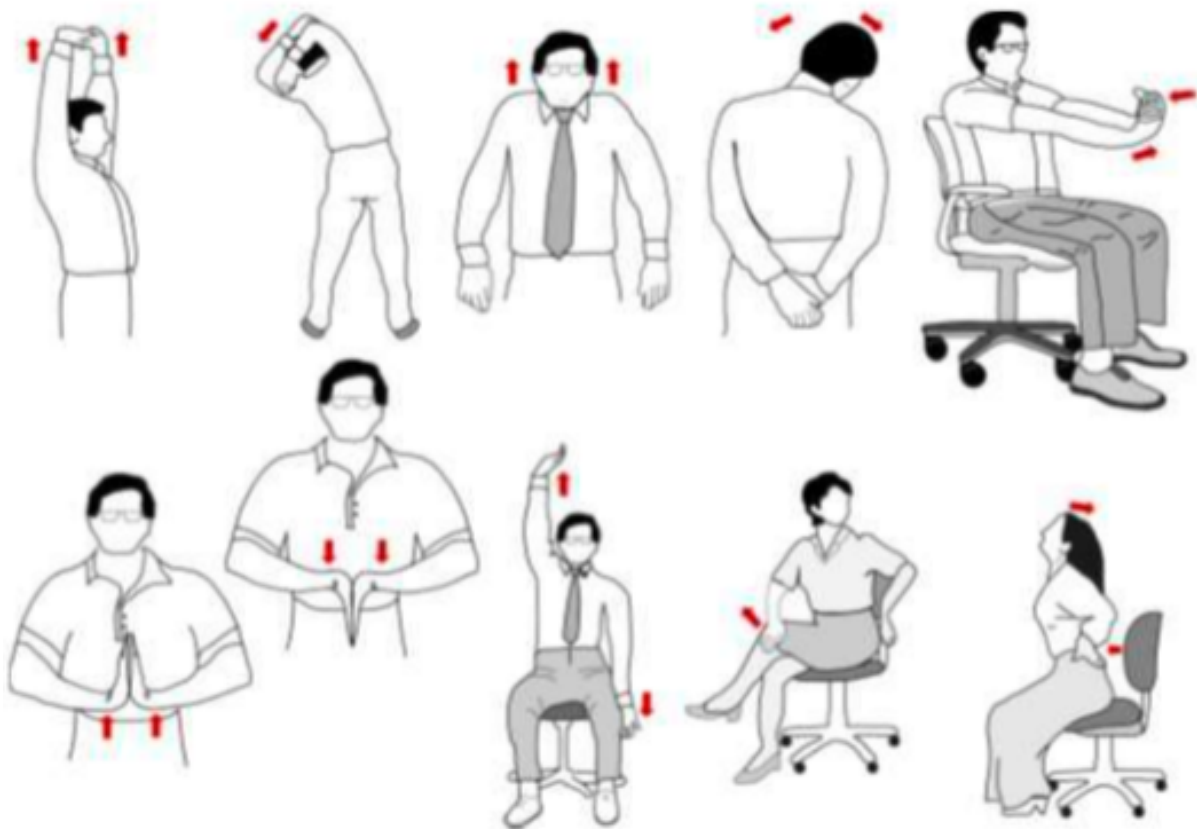


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THE IMPORTANCE OF MOVEMENT

Stretching is something we can all do regardless of where our workstation is set up, and can be performed at any time during the day. It can help reduce injury by increasing flexibility. All of the stretches should be performed slowly and in a controlled manner. Not everyone has the same range of movement so, if at any time, you feel any discomfort or pain beyond the intended stretch, do not push beyond it, stop and return to centre.

Please see below some useful stretching exercises that you can complete at your workstation, why not print these off and keep them as a reminder!



Resources:

For more information on staying active and minding your wellbeing please visit the [HSE's Health and Wellbeing](#) webpages, where you will find lots of information, tips and guidance on how to increase your physical activity.

CONTACT THE NHSF



1800 420 420

Monday to Friday
10:30am - 12pm & 2pm - 3.30pm



To log an online request for health and safety information, advice or support please click [here](#).

