



## *Can You Work at Your Laptop and Be Healthy?*

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For most of today's business functions, a laptop is a suitable workstation that empowers staff to be flexible and mobile. Working on a desktop every day has become the exception instead of the norm. Laptop sales outpaced desktops as far back as 2009 due to the versatility it brings to the modern workforce. Powerful desktop workstations feature predominantly in high-performance workflows like computer-aided design, video editing, and 3D modeling tasks. For almost anything else, a laptop will suffice and increase your mobility.

The resilience that a mobile workforce adds to an organization's operations is no longer up for debate. What was a growing trend became an existential necessity in the recent past. By 2018, a Fuze survey showed that 54% of employees were willing to change jobs if it offered them greater flexibility, while 83% said they didn't need to be in the office to be productive. Embracing employee mobility has become the new norm, but is it healthy for staff to work on just a laptop? Here are some considerations surrounding employee health and wellness while using laptops and modern tablets that enable today's remote workforces.

## A Healthy Approach to Employee Mobility

Laptops allow employees to be productive from anywhere, but when staff starts working remotely for extended periods, organizations should address the long term health implications it could create. If your company expects employees to use a laptop while working from home or any non-traditional location frequently, you must mitigate the negative effects on an employees' health and wellbeing.

### **With a suboptimal set up using just a laptop, employees may experience:**

- Fatigue and discomfort from a bad posture (even when sitting at a desk).
- Repetitive strain on the shoulders, upper back, and neck after extended use.
- Reduced productivity and task accuracy due to ergonomic limitations.

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*The longer period of exposure, the worse the effects. Bad posture due to poor screen alignment can lead to permanent illness, or what some researchers started calling Hunched Over Laptop Syndrome (HOLS).*

### **Additional long-term implications may include:**

- Wrist strain from repetitive use of the trackpad.
- Toasted leg syndrome from extended heat exposure when using the device on your lap.
- Sore muscles which could lead to debilitating pains and long-term physical problems.
- Eyestrains due to the closer proximity to the screen which could lead to nearsightedness.

## Key Recommendations from Health Professionals for Long-Term Laptop Use

Experts believe that the only thing you can do to make a difference and prevent these negative effects is to improve posture. You should also separate the screen from the input devices to create a comfortable set up, no matter where you're working from. This remains one of the major concerns when staff work from just a laptop, as some standards specifically recommend not having the screen connected to the keyboard.

By adding the necessary peripherals and accessories to your employees' home office and remote work setups or toolkits, you can mitigate these concerns and provide for a healthier work from anywhere environment.

## Accessories that Promote Healthy Posture While Working on a Laptop

One of the biggest concerns with laptop ergonomics dates back further than you may think. In the early days of computers, it was common to integrate the keyboard and screen into a single unit. This design led to complaints about musculoskeletal discomfort. New guidelines written in the 1970s called for separating the keyboard from the screen, giving users greater flexibility to align the screen and adjust the keyboard (and mouse) separately to reduce repetitive strain injuries.

Laptops, by definition, do not comply with these requirements, making them a risk to an employee's health and wellness. To overcome these challenges, you can accentuate a remote or home office set up using ergonomically designed peripherals and accessories. Below are some recommendations to help improve your posture and remain productive while working on a laptop.

### Ergonomic Keyboards to Help Reduce Repetitive Strain Injuries

Due to the persistent positioning of your wrists when using a laptop's keyboard, an ergonomically designed platform that provides support and flexibility is essential. The wireless Pro Fit Ergo® range of keyboards from Kensington is an efficient way to separate your primary input device from your laptop screen.

You can choose from designs with wrist support, slim types, handheld, and solutions that connect with other mobile computing devices like tablets and iPads. The tools you need to remain productive while working from anywhere continue to evolve. Still, you'll always need to consider your posture and how you can enhance your ability to adjust your workstation to suit your immediate environment.



## Adjust Your Posture Using an Ergonomic Laptop Stand or Riser

The height of the desk and chair you are using will influence the alignment between your eye level and the laptop screen. A laptop stand or riser enables you to adjust the angle of your device to suit any environment and desk situation. The SmartFit® Easy Riser™ Go can raise a laptop display by as much as 180mm (or 7.1in). It comes with a space-saving foldable kickstand and a padded insert for superior stability.

Using a riser as part of your laptop and home office setup enables you to work from different locations in your house and still find an optimal sitting position. Risers also improve air circulation below the laptop, dissipating heat that would put additional strain on the device's hardware.

## Invest in a Comfortable Mouse or Trackball

Having an ergonomic pointing device can also reduce repetitive strains and improve productivity. If you perform precision tasks that rely on a pointing device every day, a wireless and ambidextrous mouse or trackball liberates you from your trackpad. You can choose from any number of solutions that provide improved comfort, including vertical mice, trackballs, and ergo wireless solutions that support tablet or iPad connections.

## Additional Accessories to Improve Your Laptop Set Up

Depending on the environments you'll be operating from, you'll want to use solutions that improve your flexibility and mobility without compromising long-term health. Kensington has a range of solutions specifically aimed at supporting employees who need to remain mobile, effective, and healthy. If you use a laptop every day, you'll want to ensure you use accessories like wrist supports and ergonomic mouse pads.

## Setting Up the Optimal Work from Anywhere Environment with Kensington

Another tool that can help you improve your productivity while working from anywhere is KensingtonWorks™. You can customize your input devices and assign shortcuts to your mouse or trackball keys to speed up your work processes.

**Laptops enable a mobile workforce, but could also pose a risk to information security. To secure your endpoint devices, you should also check out Kensington's physical data protection solutions.**



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