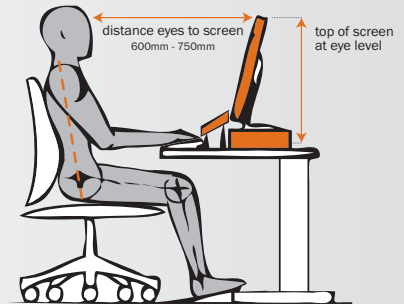


When helping to set up your child's home computer ensure the following:

## SCHOOLS SITTING WORKSTATION SET-UP *Smart Health Recommends...*

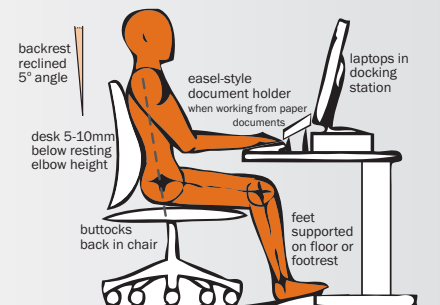
### Screen

- Distance eyes to screen 600mm-750mm. If visual focus is not sharp at this distance, consider professional eyesight assessment
- The top third of the screen should be at eye height
- If wearing eyeglasses, set screen height to encourage neutral head position



### Method

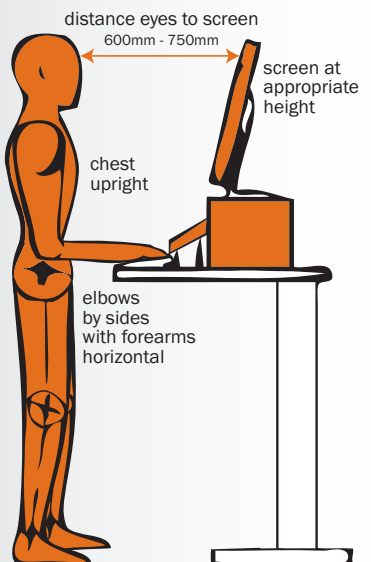
- Buttocks back in chair (ensure that length of seat allows this without calves impacting on front of seat)
- Elbows relaxed by sides with the desk 5-10mm below resting elbow height
- Avoid overreaching for mouse or keyboard (keep mouse & keyboard close to front of desk)
- Backrest of chair reclined five degrees
- Feet supported on floor or footrest
- Laptops in docking station or placed on a riser so that the top third of the screen is level with eyes. If using laptop, use separate keyboard and mouse, and preferably separate flatscreen
- Document holder or inclined reading board when using paper documents
- Hips should be very slightly above knees
- Lift chest & head to ensure shoulder blades contact backrest
- Set backrest height to comfortably support lower back arch
- Set seat height to allow for elbows at desk height (as described above), to allow relaxed shoulders and horizontal forearm



## SCHOOLS STANDING WORKSTATION SET-UP *Smart Health Recommends...*

### Screen

- Distance eyes to screen 600mm-750mm. If visual focus is not sharp at this distance, consider professional eyesight assessment
- The top third of the screen should be at eye height
- If wearing eyeglasses, set screen height to encourage neutral head position



### Method

- Changing positions (sitting to standing for instance) when working on IT devices is to be encouraged, initially every 20-30 minutes
- Regularly change foot position for comfort (if not accustomed to standing at a computer, introduce this gradually, alternating with sitting)
- Stand symmetrically. Avoid rocking across onto one hip. Avoid locking knees fully.
- Ensure supportive, well-cushioned footwear
- Elbows relaxed by sides with the desk 5-10mm below resting elbow height
- Avoid overreaching for mouse or keyboard (keep mouse and keyboard close to front of desk)
- Anti-fatigue floor matting may be used to guard against foot discomfort if standing on hard floors
- Laptops in docking station or placed on a riser so that the top third of the screen is level with eyes. If using laptop, use separate keyboard and mouse, and preferably separate flatscreen.
- Document holder or inclined reading board when using paper documents

# COMPUTER/TABLET USE IN CHILDREN

**Recent research suggests that informal computer use (gaming/surfing the internet) should be limited to 2-3 days per week and 1-2 hours on these days.** For optimising social, academic and cognitive development ideally the content of this informal use should include non-violent, pro-social and educational themes and provide opportunities for social engagement with family and peers. It should not displace other social activities.

**Alternating between sitting and standing** can reduce musculoskeletal symptoms while improving computing efficiency and productivity.

**Laptops do not encourage ideal ergonomics.** If using a laptop regularly, use an external keyboard and mouse, with an external flatscreen (or laptop riser) to allow ideal position of keyboard, mouse and screen as described.



**Tablets (iPads etc.) do not encourage ideal ergonomics.**

If using a tablet regularly, use a tablet stand and external keyboard to allow ideal position of display and keyboard. Holding a tablet consistently in the same hand leads to increase muscle tone and asymmetrical shoulder and spine tension. Smaller tablets held in portrait (rather than landscape) orientation cause less strain for smaller hands. Consistent head down postures lead directly to increased neck, shoulder and upper back discomfort.

**Neck strain is significantly decreased by looking straight ahead, so learn to touch-type.** This is not difficult, and there are many free on-line courses available.

**The behavioural and postural habits that children create during their schooling has been shown to continue into their working lives. Children model off their parents.**

**Stay active as a family!** Encourage ideal computer habits with respect to ergonomic set up, working postures and positions, overall screen time and informal computer/tablet use.

**The recently released “Australia’s Physical Activity And Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines” from the Department of Health, Australian Government reports that nearly 70% of all Australian adults are either sedentary or have low levels of physical activity - that’s nearly 12 million adults!**

For children 5 - 17 years, the Australian Government recommends:

- At least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity every day. This should include a variety of aerobic activities, including some vigorous intensity activity.
- Engage in activities that strengthen muscle and bone at least three days per week. To achieve additional health benefits, children should engage in more activity – up to several hours per day.
- Minimise sedentary time every day.



For scientific references regarding the information above, please contact Smart Health



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AUSTRALIA'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND  
SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES