Practical Ergonomics Guide for Government Workspaces

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Ergonomics is a vital element in government workspaces, helping to enhance employee health, productivity, and overall satisfaction.

By minimizing physical strain and preventing injuries through adjustable workstations, ergonomic furniture and tools, and inclusive designs, workers can perform effectively while reducing absenteeism and healthcare costs.

Prioritizing ergonomics can help foster productivity and ensures compliance with accessibility standards, creating healthy and adaptive environments for employees. In today's dynamic work era, investing in proper ergonomic setups can not only benefit individual workers but also help strengthen performance and thus public service delivery, positioning government agencies, departments, and employees for long-term success.

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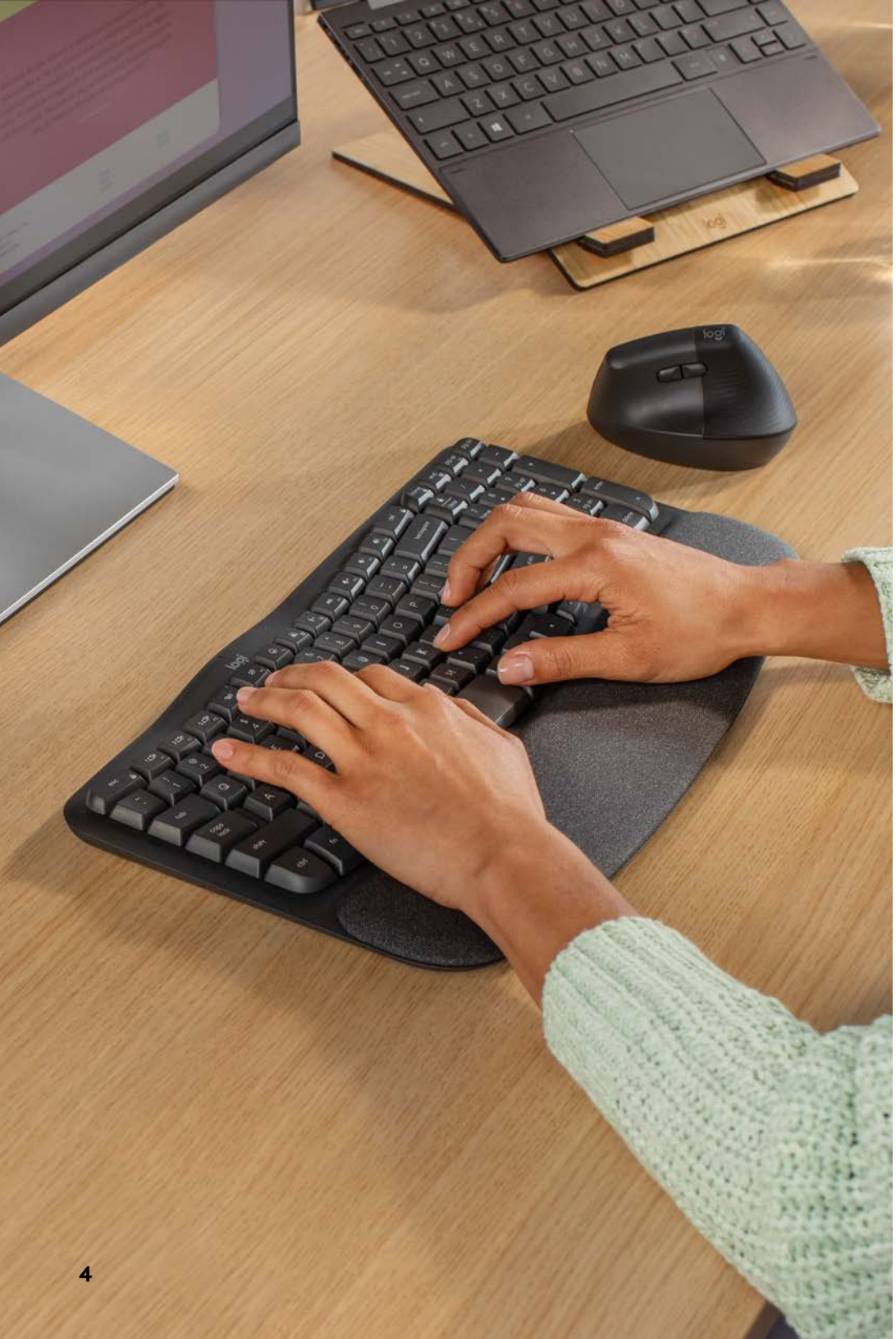
Read on and learn how ergonomic solutions and easy-to-implement workspace designs can help your team.

The Logi Ergo Lab

"We do better when we feel better."

That core, systemic belief underpins the rigorous work we do at the Logitech Ergo Lab, based in Switzerland. We take a human-centered and scientific approach to support the development and reinvention of tools that help people feel better in the office, in the field, or working remotely.

Our researchers collaborate with academics, practitioners, designers, and product teams to make the future of work more people-friendly, with ergonomic products and solutions that reduce muscle strain and improve posture, comfort, and overall well-being.



Productivity Meets Ergonomic Design

Employees spend an average of 96.1 hours per week in front of screens—equivalent to four full days. Over a year, this amounts to 208 days of screen time or 57% of the entire year.[1]

That extended amount of time can lead to more ergonomic concerns. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are responsible for over 1 million workplace injuries annually in the U.S., costing an estimated $20 billion in workers' compensation claims.[2] It is estimated that as much as 33% of workers compensation costs in the US are due to ergonomic-related injuries.

Research from around the globe also finds that over 60% of all people who work with computers experience pain from repetitive strain injuries in the wrist, hand, neck, and shoulders.[3]

Ergonomics isn't just critical for physical wellness. It can also impact productivity. 60% of workers who missed work due to musculoskeletal injuries experienced reduced productivity after they returned to work.[4]

Decreased productivity from ergonomic injuries doesn't just affect individual workers—it ripples throughout entire teams and departments. As tasks pile up and output decreases, the overall performance of the department can suffer. For departments that depend on speed and efficiency, especially where downtime is costly, ergonomic injuries pose a significant threat to maintaining productivity and meeting mission objectives.

No matter the setup or where work takes place, simple actions can help improve employee well-being and enhance productivity.

Ergonomic Strategies

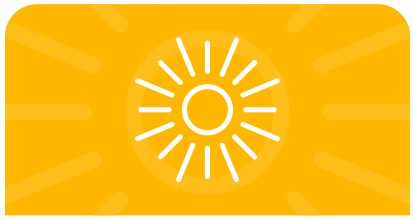
Considerations to improve wellbeing and productivity

Posture

When laptops are used on a desk, the head angles down by about 10 degrees. When placed in a person's lap, that angle increases by 5 degrees. That tilt makes the head feel double its weight putting extra strain on the neck and shoulders.[5]

Solution

Place laptop and tablet screens at eye level, especially during longer viewing periods.



Banish Glare

Glare can increase eye strain. Eyes adapt to the brightest level of light, so it becomes harder to see details in duller and darker areas.

Solution

Place screens perpendicular to windows. Close curtains or shades while working.

Movement

The human body is not designed to sit or stand all day, it is designed to move. Quick movement breaks show marked improvement in cognitive function, reading comprehension, and productivity.[6]

Solution

Switch between sitting and standing in intervals. Walking around while standing is even better.

Air Quality

CO_2 levels rise surprisingly fast, especially in crowded spaces. High levels of CO_2 can result in drowsiness, headaches, poor concentration, loss of attention, and more.

Solution

If possible, open a window for a few minutes, several times a day, to let in fresh air.

Need an easy-to-deploy environmental sensor?

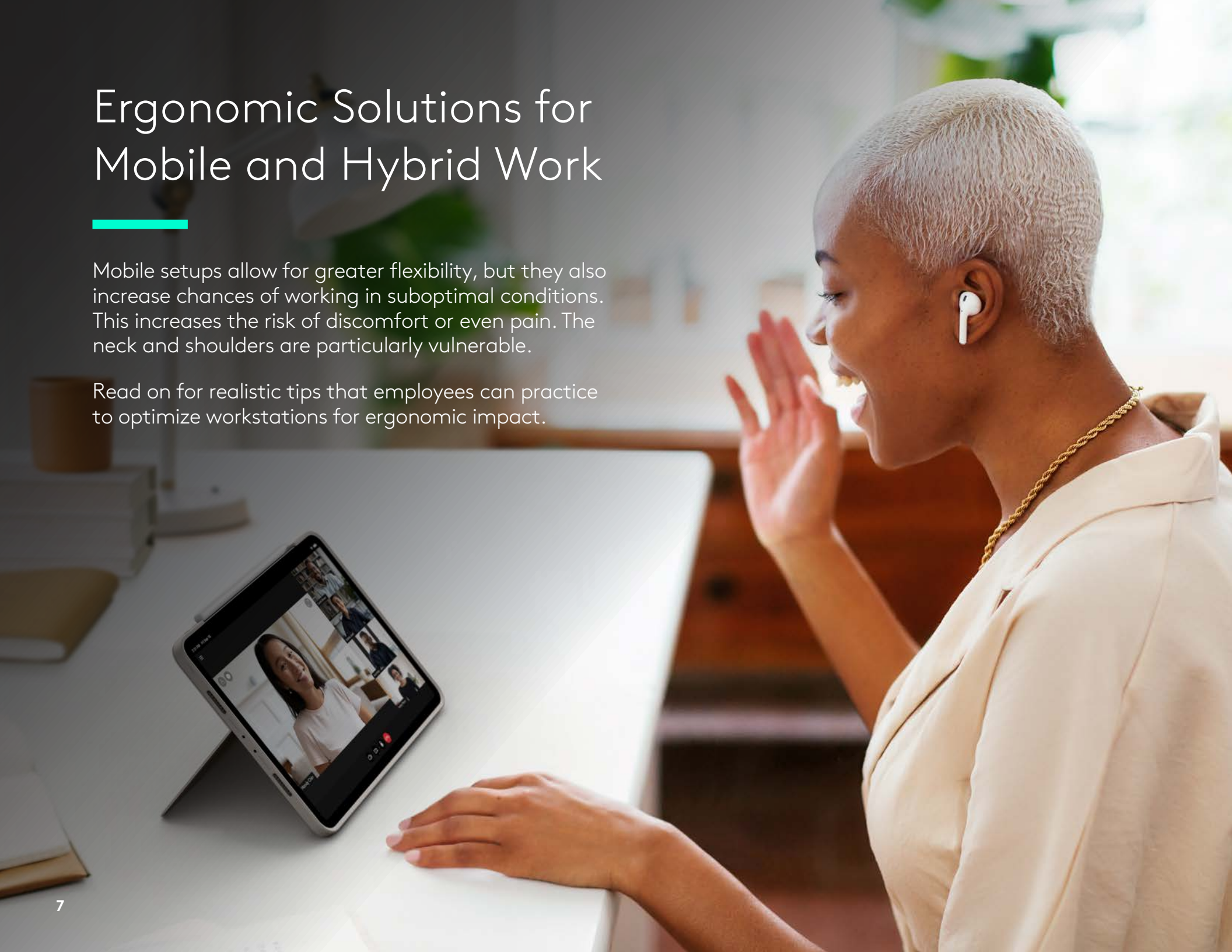
Logitech Spot is a modern-day office sensor designed to enable smarter workspace automations and actionable insights on space utilization, air quality, and energy efficiency.[7]

LEARN MORE

Ergonomic Solutions for Mobile and Hybrid Work

Mobile setups allow for greater flexibility, but they also increase chances of working in suboptimal conditions. This increases the risk of discomfort or even pain. The neck and shoulders are particularly vulnerable.

Read on for realistic tips that employees can practice to optimize workstations for ergonomic impact.



Optimizing Setups With Laptops and Tablets

With laptops and tablets, the screen and input are tethered together, forcing an ergonomic trade-off: Adjusting one to improve ergonomics may worsen the ergonomics of the other.

Adjusting to the screen

If the screen is at an ergonomic distance and height, reaching can be difficult, and hand and wrist posture can be awkward without the use of external peripherals. This can increase the risk of discomfort and strain.

Adjusting to the input

If the device is placed so that input devices are used comfortably, then the screen will likely be too close, and too low, to the employee, increasing the risk of eye strain and the risk of neck and shoulder strain.

Solution

Laptop, table stands, and external mice and keyboards such as the Logitech Ergo M575 and Ergo K860, provide ergonomic benefits. A lifted screen encourages a more natural neck posture and helps reduce neck and shoulder strain, while an ergonomic mouse and split ergonomic keyboard can help minimize movement, maximize comfort, and offer better posture, less strain, and more support. Because these screens tend to be smaller, adjusting the font size can also help reduce eye strain.

Positioning tablets

- Avoid placing tablets in laps or holding them in hands.
- Place tablets on a surface (table or desk) to reduce wrist strain and neck strain from looking down at the screen.
- Place tablets arms-length away to reduce eye fatigue, and increase font size to see better if needed.
- Use a flexible kickstand, like that found in the Logitech Rugged Folio, with 40° of tilt for the right angle for the task at hand.

Adjusting to the work

- When reading, watching, and typing with an integrated physical keyboard, use the steeper angle on a stand, and avoid placing the tablet flat on a table.
- Prop the laptop or tablet up with books if needed to reduce eye and neck strain.
- When drawing, writing, or typing on a virtual keyboard, use the lower angle of the stand, or lay the device flat on a table for a better hand and wrist position.

Headsets for Effective Communication

Headsets and external microphones with good sound quality and noise cancellation can help provide more effective communication. Using headsets, especially those with built in microphones, offer a number of ergonomic and well-being benefits.

Benefits

- Employees are less likely to lean towards the computer or tablet to hear or be heard, which helps reduce strain on eyes, neck, and back.
- Wireless headphones allow employees to move around while listening, which helps to avoid prolonged stationary positions.

Considerations

- The World Health Organization recommends that sound levels should be adjusted to less than 75 decibels (or no more than 60% of the maximum volume).[5]
- Regular breaks are recommended, especially when employees wear headsets for extended periods.

Ergonomic Solutions for Desktops

Technology for desktops is important too. The right tech can save energy, help employees focus, and promote overall well-being. Using external peripherals—like an external screen, webcam, mouse, and keyboard—can create an optimal desk setup and offer microadjustments that can make a big difference.

The Ideal Setup

External Webcam

An external webcam like the TAA-compliant Logitech Brio 505 placed on top of an external screen rather than on a laptop helps employees look straight ahead. This improves neck posture and reduces neck and shoulder strain.

External Screen

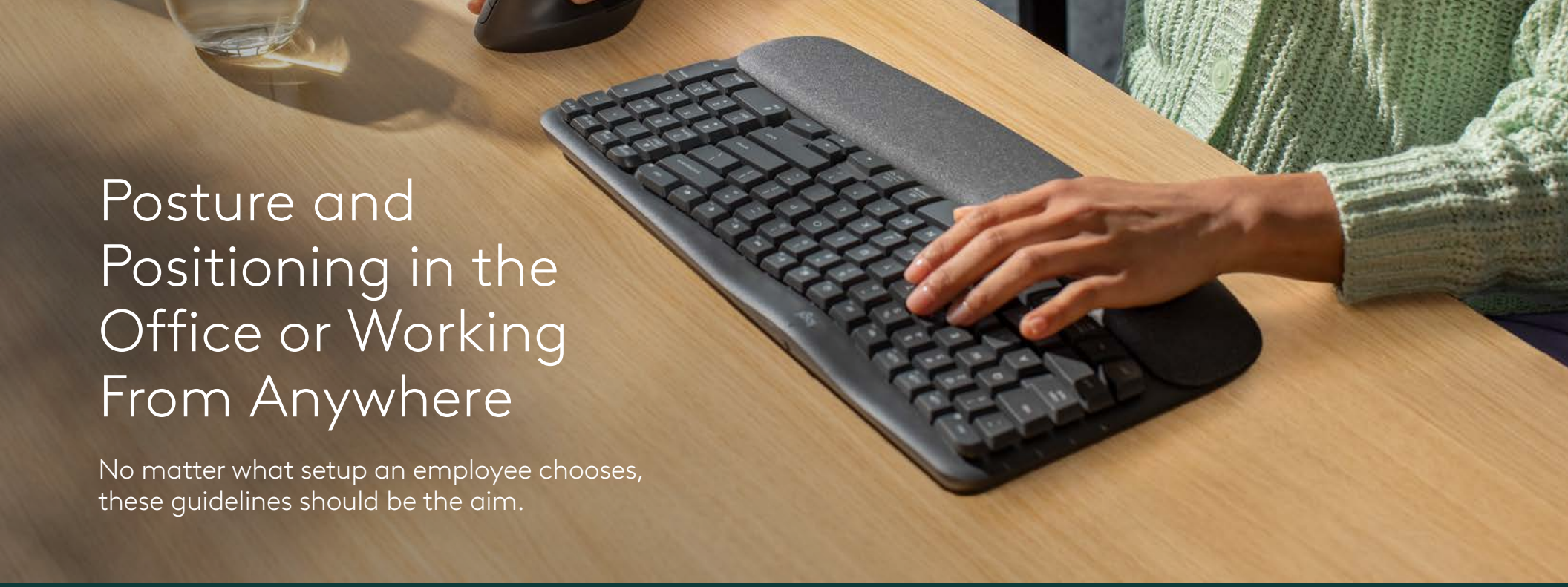
Positioning the laptop at the right height and distance reduces the need to bend the neck. To improve posture and minimize neck, shoulder, and eye strain, place the laptop on a stand.

External Mouse and Keyboard

External peripherals like the Logitech Lift Mouse and Wave Keys allow employees to select the device that is the right size for them and with the right functionalities for their unique tasks. This encourages long-lasting comfort and productivity.

Headset and External Microphone

Using a headset like the Logitech H390 or Zone 305 (with a built-in or external mic) ensures that employees can hear and are heard better, and reduces the need to lean forward which can put strain on your back.



Posture and Positioning in the Office or Working From Anywhere

No matter what setup an employee chooses, these guidelines should be the aim.

- Place feet flat on the floor with knees, ankles, and hips at about 90° angles.
- Keep elbows at about 90° when typing or using a mouse.
- Provide support for the lower back with backrest or pillows.
- Support thighs by adjusting the seat pan, or sit further back in the chair.
- Avoid crossing legs, sit up straight, and change positions from time to time.

By addressing common challenges in office, field, and hybrid setups, proper ergonomic practices across government workspaces can help boost productivity also while enhancing employee well-being, supporting accessibility, and lowering costs related to absenteeism and healthcare.

To learn more about Logitech solutions for government workspaces, visit logitech.com/government.

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Sources

[1] Workplace Intelligence 2024 Workplace Vision Health Report

[2] US Bureau of Labor Statistics Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses Data

[3] Prevalence of musculoskeletal pain among computer users working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic: a cross-sectional survey
Musculoskeletal disorders among computer user workers in Ethiopia: a systematic review and meta-analysis
Prevalence rate of neck, shoulder and lower back pain in association with age, body mass index and gender among Malaysian office workers

[4] Research paper: Reduced productivity after sickness absence due to musculoskeletal disorders and its relation to health outcomes

[5] *Tech neck*. (2018, December 19). Chiropractors' Association of Saskatchewan. https://saskchiro.ca/tech-neck/

[6] World Health Organization Deafness and hearing loss: Safe listening

[7] Logitech Room Booking and automations, Logitech View, Insights, and some APIs require an additional service license. Booking and automations can also be enabled through existing service licenses with other workplace platforms. See this article for more details.