

How to Set Up a Migraine-Friendly Workspace at Home

Setting up a migraine-friendly space at home for work or school can help decrease migraine frequency and increase productivity



Whether it's for work or school, many of us feel tied to our computer screens and desks. Long periods of sitting and increased time using technology can have negative impacts on posture, neck pain, and headaches, including migraine.

Virtual learning or working from home allows you to create a personalized workstation to suit your needs. This guide will help you set up a migraine-friendly workspace in your house.

Set up a dedicated work space

While working or attending school remotely means you have more flexibility over where you work, setting up a dedicated space can be beneficial. Rather than tuning into virtual meetings from the comfort of your bed or couch, consider a more traditional set up with a table or desk and a chair.

Setting up a dedicated space means you can make sure your frequently used items are within easy reach. When you're at work or school, you're getting up and doing things and there are some natural times when you're reminded to engage in self-care activities that work for you. When you're sitting at your desk all day, those reminders might not happen naturally. For example, keeping a water bottle in plain sight on your desk can help remind you to drink water.

Light sensitivity is a very common symptom of migraine, and this can be worsened by screen usage. By having a specific workspace, you can ensure that the lighting in the space works for you. For example, using a bright screen in a dimly lit room may contribute to light sensitivity.

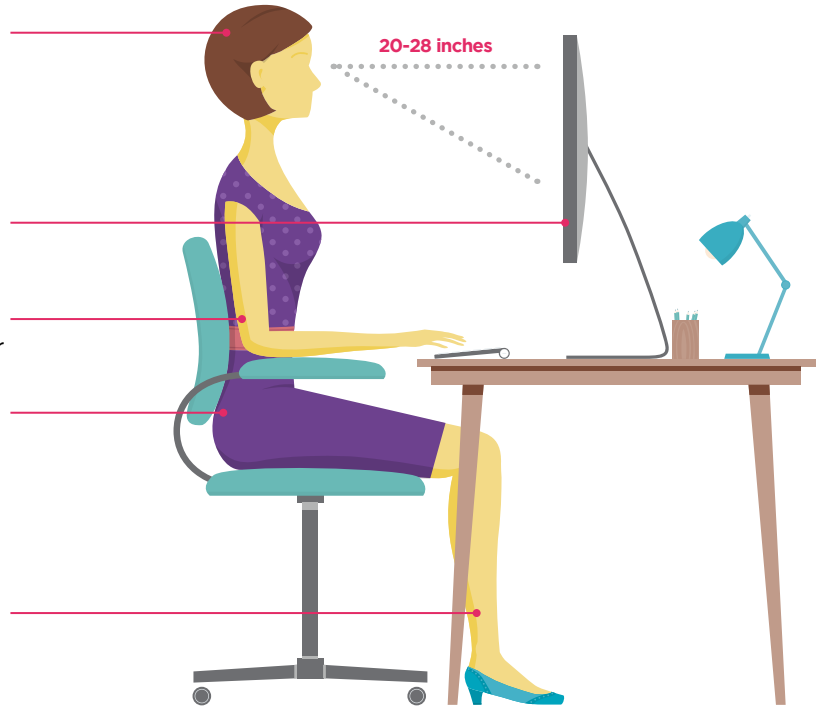
You can also try adding complementary light (such as a lamp), reducing screen brightness, changing the settings to warmer colors or using blue-light blocking glasses. While there isn't strong evidence on the benefits of these changes, you may find them helpful.

Work Space Checklist

- ☐ Work/School Essentials
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Snacks
- ☐ Any daily medications
- ☐ Screen Filter or blue-light blocking glasses
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Steps to Good Seated Posture

1. Sit with your head and neck upright in a neutral position.
2. Keep your computer screen about 20-28 inches in front of your face and slightly below eye level to keep from straining your neck. When using books or smaller electronic devices, bring the book or device to eye level. Consider using support devices like cases or stands when possible.
3. Keep your arms and elbows close to your body, use an arm rest for support and keep your wrists in a neutral position.
4. Sit with your hips fully back in your chair and with your back supported. Try placing a small rolled towel behind your lower back to decrease the space between the chair and your back.
5. Rest your feet flat on the floor (or supported by foot rest) and avoid sitting on your feet or crossing your legs.



Focus on maintaining good posture

Whether you're working from an office or your bedroom, good posture is important. It's especially important for people with migraine because research shows they have more neck dysfunction than the general population.

Make time for activity breaks and non-screen activity

Schedule timed breaks throughout the day. During these breaks, you can work on stretching exercises to help with proper posture, do a 10-minute walk around your

neighborhood, or take a full lunch hour to be away from your desk. Even just standing up for a bit can help. Not only will breaks help your neck and spine, they'll help you return to your school or workday feeling refreshed and energized.

Just like keeping a water bottle on your desk can encourage you to drink water, keeping items that remind you to stretch or exercise (a yoga mat, for example) can encourage you to take breaks to get some physical activity or exercise.

It's also important to make sure you're getting non-screen time each day. Having a dedicated workspace can make it easier to close the door, walk away from your desk and physically and mentally leave work or school behind for the day.

AMERICAN  MIGRAINE
FOUNDATION

The mission of the American Migraine Foundation is to mobilize a community for patient support and advocacy, as well as drive and support impactful research that translates into advances for patients with migraine and other disabling diseases that cause severe head pain. Visit americanmigrainefoundation.org for more resources for people living with migraine and their supporters.

American Migraine Foundation

One Rockefeller Plaza, 11th Floor

New York, NY 10020

P: +1 (929)-376-1333

E: info@americanmigrainefoundation.org

