Shifting Gears for Employees:

Adjusting to E-Work

In March 2020, out of necessity, many of us took our work home, set up temporary office space, and adjusted our routines to ensure the continuity of our workplace responsibilities. For many, this temporary shift is becoming standard practice.

This guide provides recommendations to help you succeed at working from home.

At this point in time, you may have been working from home for a while. To ensure that your productivity, satisfaction, health, and work-life balance are optimal, take time to stop and reflect on what is and isn't working for you.

The following work from home checklist can help you get started. Use it to conduct a basic assessment of your workstation ergonomics, workplace communications, and work-life balance.

Workstation Basics

To get started, you'll need:

- A functional and distraction-free workspace (separate from other activities, if possible)
- Applicable technology with access to required applications and networks
- Internet service that meets your needs (the closer you are to your Wi-Fi router, the better the connection, Ethernet provides the most reliable access)
- Good lighting: a desk lamp with soft lighting, and if possible, a nearby window

Has your workplace adopted a work from home policy yet? A policy can provide a framework of best practices. These will contribute to a successful, happy, and productive working environment.

Communication

Communication is critical to being effective and feeling connected:

- Communicate with your team regularly through scheduled meetings and ad hoc check-ins
- To enable effective engagement, make sure your schedule overlaps with team members a minimum of 4 hours a day

The Perfect Fit

The proper set-up for your workstation is important to your comfort, productivity, and health. Whether you have a standing or sitting desk, your body should rest in a neutal position:

- **HANDS, WRISTS, AND FOREARMS** should be straight, in-line, and roughly parallel to the floor
- **HEAD** should be level or bent forward slightly, forward facing, and aligned with your body
- **SPINE** should be upright and erect
- **SHOULDERS** should be relaxed with your upper arms hanging along the sides of your body
- **ELBOWS** should stay close to your body, bent between 90 and 120 degrees
- **NO TWISTIING** - You should refrain from twisting your upper body
- **EYE LEVEL** - The top of your monitor should be eye level to slightly below eye level

- Cdn. Centre for Occupational Health & Safety

Laptops are designed for portability and intermittant use. If you use a laptop for many hours a day, set it up ergonomically (see box above) by placing it on a riser. Use a separate keyboard and mouse.

Work-Life Balance

- **MAINTAIN A REGULAR SCHEDULE** - Set a schedule, with lunchtime and breaks, and stick to it.
- **TRANSITION TIME IS KEY** - Create a morning routine that kicks off your workday. Consider "commuting to the office" by walking around your neighbourhood.
- **SEPARATE WORK AND PERSONAL TIME** - Dedicate your attention to job duties during working hours. Multi-tasking isn't helpful to productivity or job satisfaction.
- **WE ARE SOCIAL CREATURES** - Workplace culture is critical to job satisfaction. Find ways to socialize with co-workers through "water cooler" apps and planned events.
- **GET ASSISTANCE WHEN OVERWHELMED** - There are many resources to help you balance your mental, social, and physical needs, including employee assistance programs and the Canadian Mental Health Association. Seek them out.

For information about supporting active and sustainable transportation and work options, visit **www.greenup.on.ca/shiftinggears**

peterborough GreenUP