



VIDESIGN CASE STUDY

ViOFFICE: HOME OFFICE ERGONOMICS

DISCOVERY

A team leader from central support services of a government organisation was required to work from home in response to an organisational approach to protect workers per pandemic management procedures. Aside from these protections, the workplace issued laptops and monitor stands with a small external keyboard to support their workforce. This team leader reported discomfort in her neck and back while working from home.

A virtual assessment was undertaken via remote video access with interviews and observations. Scientific literature was referred as were general guidance documents and ergonomic workstation standards for equipment set-up.

DESIGN

The team leader was given access to ViVA's online interactive case study, ViOffice, with the animated character, Jessie. This helped her learn about a few workstation set-up ideas that she could apply. When she conferred with the ergonomist remotely on-line, she was found to have positioned her monitor on a stand

exceedingly high. Even directly at eye level, she learned that this "Google Ergonomics" set up aimed to address upright "neutral" postures. However, education was provided by the ergonomist, and she learned that the "poster perfect" (imperfect) upright seated position did not accommodate the idea that visual convergence is improved when looking at near-items (like text font) lower, and that the eyes can move independently of the head and neck. Also, reclining in one's chair can aid comfort, as can sit-to-stand work variations, while moving more between tasks. A double monitor set-up was arranged, per the use of her laptop at tabletop height and one in line with this monitor, with an adjustable tilt and multi-directional arm to move it fore-aft and vertically. She could position this lower and angle it slightly upward, strategically for best viewing gazes and to avoid glare from the ambient (overhead) lighting. A desk lamp was purchased with heat-dispersing LED lighting to enable more focal task lighting that better accommodated her visual needs.

A cantilevered sit-to-stand desk was approved for this team leader, and discussions were held about sit and stand work options around the house had it not been possible to affect a desk change. Therapeutic exercises for the neck and upper back were demonstrated and prescribed.

REALISATION

The team leader's discomforts resolved within two weeks of her new office workstation set-up and, if early onset of discomfort arose, she reported being better disciplined about getting up and walking or doing a light home-based physical activity. Her productivity, she said, was improved. She authorised a subscription-based access for her team to review the Jessie ViOffice animated interactive case study so that they could learn some tips for their remote office set-up.

