Ergonomic Basics for Telecommuters
Adapted from Ergonomic Basic for Telecommuters by Marsh Risk Consulting

FSU Overview
As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, a large number of employees are now working from remote locations. From the documents Guidelines for Staff who are Temporarily Teleworking (Working Remotely) during COVID-19, please note the following: “Teleworking Staff will be solely responsible for the configuration of, and all expenses associated with, the teleworking workspace and all services. This includes ensuring and maintaining an ergonomically appropriate and safe teleworking worksite.”

On the FSU campus, employees are assigned work locations with an appropriate work station with task chair, good lighting, and enough work space to do your job. Now, you may be working at your kitchen table, on your couch, or from a small table setup in the corner of your bedroom. Included below is information that can assist you in setting up your remote work area to ensure it is ergonomically correct.

If you have questions, please contact Maureen Fowler, Director of Environmental Health and Safety, at mfowler@framingham.edu.

A Remote Workstation Should Include:
A dedicated home office space whenever possible. This space should meet the basic ergonomic requirements of any other work space.

An office with a desk, adjustable office chair, and desktop computer is ideal.

If not in a dedicated office space, or using a laptop as the primary computer, the laptop should be elevated to position the screen at eye level. A separate keyboard and mouse should be used.

HOW TO PROPERLY ADJUST YOUR CHAIR
- **Backrest**: Sit back in the chair, allowing the backrest to support the natural curvature of your spine.
- **Seat Height**: Adjust the seat height until your thighs are approximately parallel with the floor, and elbows are at a 90 to 100-degree angle when using the keyboard.
- **Seat Depth**: Adjust the seat pan to ensure that there are a couple inches of space between the back of your knees and the seat edge.
- **Armrests**: Lower or remove the armrests so that your neck and shoulders can relax. Armrests should not interfere with movement or prevent you from sliding the chair under the work surface.
- **Footrest**: Use an angled footrest to support feet if feet don’t reach the floor.

KEYBOARD/MOUSE PLACEMENT
- Keyboard is centered and close to the edge of the desk.
- Keyboard is horizontal or on a slightly negative slope.
- Mouse is within easy reach and on the same surface as the keyboard.
• Adjust the keyboard or chair height to keep forearms, wrists, and hands in a straight line.
• Use a footrest to support feet if feet don’t reach the floor when elbows are at or slightly higher than keyboard

ADJUSTING YOUR MONITOR
• Center the monitor(s) in front of you, directly behind the keyboard.
• Position the monitor about an arm’s length away.
• The top of the screen should be at or slightly below eye level. If wearing bifocals, lower the monitor an additional 1-2 inches.

PROPER LIGHTING
• Position the monitor so that the brightest light source is to the side.
• Adjust window shades and overhead lighting to reduce glare.

ACCESSORIES
• Use a headset or speakerphone if you talk on the phone frequently.
• Use a document holder, if needed, to prevent looking down frequently. Place the document holder at about the same height and distance as the monitor.

POSTURE
• Hips and knees are at a 90 to 100-degree angle.
• Feet are flat on the floor, or supported by a footrest.
• Head and neck are balanced and inline with the torso (ears directly above the shoulders).
• Head, neck, and trunk are facing forward (not twisted to view monitors or documents).
• Torso is upright and back is supported by the chair (not leaning forward, slouching, or sitting unsupported).
• Shoulders are relaxed, upper arms inline with the torso, and elbows close to the body (not elevated or reaching forward).
• Forearms are approximately parallel to the floor. Elbows are at a 90 to 100-degree angle.
• Hands, wrists, and forearms are aligned (not bent up, down, or sideways).

MICRO BREAKS
• It is important to move often during your work day. Prolonged sitting places excessive stress on the body and can lead to sore muscles and stiff joints.
• Micro-breaks (short breaks approximately 2 minutes in length) are used for standing, stretching, and moving.
• These breaks help relieve muscle strain and fatigue, improve breathing and circulation, and increases attention and engagement.