

COMFORT AND JOY

WORKING from home is taking its toll. According to a recent survey by the Institute for Employment Studies, there's been a 'significant increase in musculo-skeletal complaints' since lockdown.

It's no wonder with many of us sitting at impromptu work stations, sleeping on inadequate mattresses and spending more time than usual on uncomfortable furniture.

All this can lead to neck and wrist pain, headaches, back problems and tennis elbow. So, investing in furniture that combines both form and function can go a long way towards preventing these problems, as well as helping to create a serene, ergonomic home.

DESK JOB

AS HOME-WORKING shows no sign of abating, the right desk and seating is essential. A good desk chair needs to support your body, allowing for plenty of movement.

You should be able to use your keyboard with your wrists and forearms straight and level with the floor. Switching between a desk chair, Swiss ball and standing desk over the course of the day provides a variety of working positions for your body.

For those whose feet don't quite reach the floor, a footrest can help.

'A good one will allow you to rock your feet to help with blood circulation,' advises David Barrett, living and dining buyer at John Lewis (johnlewis.com). 'The longer you use the chair daily, the more features you should take into consideration, like seat height and tilt adjustments. Look for one that has lumbar support. If you are sitting for several hours a day, you will find mesh a cooler fabric option.'

Consider a desk with built-in storage to help

With more of us spending our days at home, it's time to invest in chic, ergonomical furniture, says **Emma J. Page**



Balance: John Lewis's posture-enhancing Soren office chair, £399

Pictures: GETTY

create a tidy atmosphere, plus integrated cable management for computing equipment.

For desks that combine practicality with good looks, try String's brilliantly useful Works desk, with rise and fall system for flexibility, £1,334 (utilitydesign.co.uk) or John Lewis's mid-century Soren walnut desk, £699, and Soren office chair, £399.

Straining your eyes to read your screen can lead to headaches. For maximum productivity,

set up a work space with good natural light. 'An extendable wall lamp is very useful as it offers flexibility that a fixed light can't,' advises Pooky's Rohan Blacker (pooky.com). 'I also recommend using a desk lamp to balance light levels with computer screen glare.'

If sitting and working for prolonged periods is causing body pain, remember to take regular breaks and move around.

'Play with sitting upright, sitting back, sitting forward,' says Pilates specialist Emma Bray (emmabraypilates.co.uk).

'Change your leg position. If your hips and knees allow, try sitting with one ankle across the opposite knee, which helps hips. Even sit cross-legged if there is room on your chair.'

NEAT SEATING

ERGONOMIC sofas, chairs and chaise longues will help support your posture as well as creating a streamlined look at home. Deep-seated couches and curved pieces are on-trend as well as providing a comfortable sitting experience.

Soho Home's latest range of furniture, inspired by the bold silhouettes of Modernist schemes, features the elegantly curved Clovelly sofa, from £2,295, designed with a deep, comfortable sit in mind, while its Sagrada chair, £795 (sohohome.com), effortlessly combines style and ergonomics with its aged leather sling.

Dual function pieces are good options, too. The Edit Chair from Heal's, £419, (heals.com) with its left to right swivel and double padded seat, provides optimum ergonomic support in an office setting, while working equally well as a dining chair. And for longevity, look to mid-century design classics.

The Conran Shop's heirloom CH07 Shell Lounge Chair, £2,520, first designed in 1963 by Hans J. Wegner, pairs comfort and support with a striking avant-garde silhouette (£2,928 in walnut and cowhide, pictured, conranshop.co.uk), while the store's Tip Ton Chair, £259, by Vitra, has a unique forward tilt action, which straightens the pelvis and spine, improving circulation to the abdominal and back muscles.

SLEEP WELL

POCKET spring mattresses are designed to take the pressure off joints and muscles, absorbing the tension and weight of the body for a solid night's rest. A general rule of thumb is to look for a mattress with more than 1,000 pocket springs as the benchmark for total body support.

'If you're a side-sleeper or someone who tends to move around a lot in the night,

STRETCH IT OUT

THREE simple stretches to ease desk strain from osteopath Emma Bundle @emmatheosteopath and phoenixosteopathy.com

CHIN TUCKS: Sit upright and face straight ahead. Keeping your head level, draw your head down until you feel a gentle stretch in the back of the neck. Hold for ten seconds then return to the starting position. Try three sets of ten to 15 repetitions.

NECK AND SHOULDER STRETCH: Sit on the palm of your left hand and drop your right ear towards the right shoulder. Breathe into the stretch and hold for 15 seconds, repeating three times on each side.

CHEST STRETCH: Stand in the middle of a doorway, with your arms out to your sides and elbows bent upwards to 90 degrees, resting against the frame. Step forwards with one leg so your arms are gently pushed backwards. Take care not to arch your lower back and keep core muscles tight. Hold for 15 seconds, repeating three times.

then choose a softer mattress to mould to your body shape more easily,' advises Matthew West, product development manager at Hypnos (hypnosbeds.com).

'If you sleep on your back or suffer from back pain, then a firm mattress will keep your spine stable and well-supported.'

Try Hypnos' Regency St James, £1,989 (double), for ultimate support.

The White Company's Lancaster mattress, from £580 for a double, (thewhitecompany.com) is a good value option.

Ensuring you have a perfectly plump pillow to fill the space between your shoulder and ear helps to prevent neck, shoulder and back pain during sleep.

A quality option will aid spine alignment. Try the Deluxe Duck Down, £56, Sheridan (sheridanaustralia.co.uk), for a blend of comfort and style.



Well supported: Conran Shop's CH07 Shell Lounge Chair, £2,928

Interiors



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