

# WHS Guideline

## Sit / Stand Workstations

### Background

There is considerable evidence to suggest that prolonged sitting is detrimental to health, increasing the risk of illness and disease, even when people exercise regularly.

Conversely, there are many benefits to sitting less and moving more, including reduced risk of chronic diseases, improved weight management and reducing the risk of developing musculoskeletal disorders.

The Heart Foundation of Australia's advice for adults includes:

- Regular breaks from sitting to reduce the risk of chronic disease, including adults who exercise regularly
- Encourage strategies for work to reduce sitting time and promote regular movement.

It is important to note the adults who engage in regular planned exercise can still sit for long periods during the day and therefore still need to consider standing benefits.

### What can we do in the workplace to sit less and move more?

- stand and take a break from your desk every 30 minutes
- use stairs and avoid lifts
- use bins and printers that are located further from your workstation
- take standing breaks in long sitting meetings
- stand to greet a visitor
- stand for phone calls
- walk to colleagues' desks to speak instead of phoning or emailing them
- use height adjustable desks
- have standing meetings
- have walking meetings
- use a headset or speaker during phone calls enabling standing
- eat your lunch away from your desk
- stand at the back of the room during presentations
- park the car further away from work
- use active transport to commute to work (walk, ride your bike, stand while taking the train/bus or at the station/stop)

Standing-friendly culture can be promoted and supported in the workplace through raising awareness and behaviour-modelling by managers/supervisors.

## Steps to take at UniSA to encourage less sitting

All seated work would benefit from increased breaks from sitting. Where possible, review and revise job and task design and minimise sitting time for sedentary work.

Locate facilities to encourage incidental movement, e.g. place waste disposal units, centralised printers and other facilities away from workstations and other interventions as mentioned above.

Individual areas may determine through budget and other priorities their requirements for sitting less including the provision of sit stand workstations.

## Criteria for ordering a sit stand desk

1. Staff should discuss their request with their line manager.
2. Complete an online Appian Workstation Self-Assessment
3. WHS Consultant will review the Workstation Self-Assessment to determine ergonomic requirements and provide recommendations.
4. It is the responsibility of the individual unit to pay for sit stand desks.

## Specifications of desks

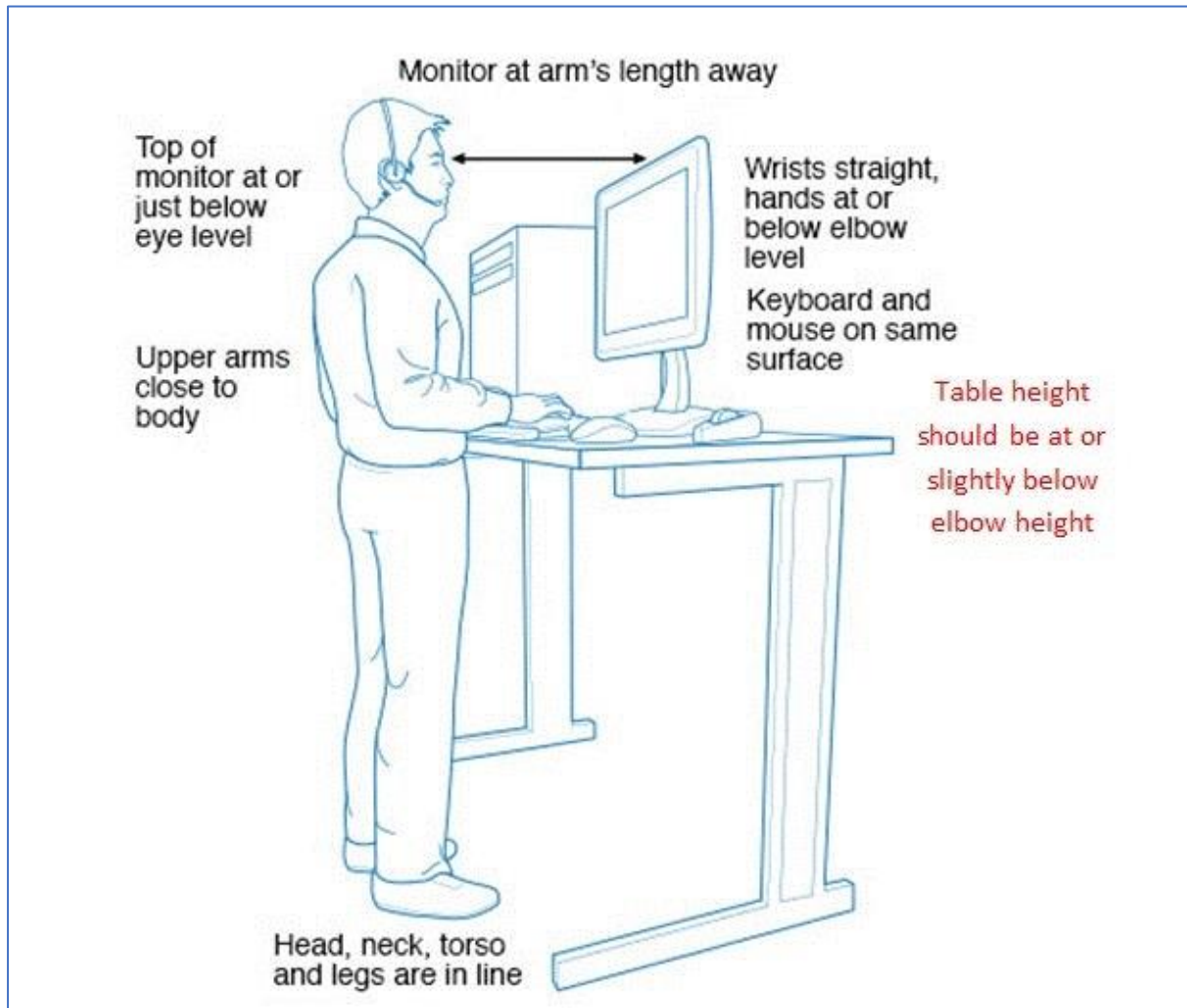
1. All electric sit stand desks must be approved models and purchased from approved suppliers.
2. All electric sit stand desks will be delivered and installed with a below desk cable tray and powerpack.
3. All desks will be tagged for electrical compliance on delivery.

## Suppliers

1. Orders can only be made following review and recommendations of the relevant WHS Consultant and approval of the applicants Line Manager.
2. The University of South Australia's approved electric sit stand desk supplier is Workspace.
3. Note that desktop units are assessed using the same process as detailed above but ordered through ANZ Office Furniture.

## How to set up your sit stand desk

Alternate between sitting and standing throughout the day. Stand for as long as possible throughout the day to achieve the full benefits of a sit stand workstation.



1. Determine the standing desk height by relaxing your shoulders and bending your elbows to 90°.
2. Adjust the desk height to just below the forearms.
3. Keep your neck neutral, shoulders relaxed and your wrists straight in front of you.
4. Lift or lower the standing desk to align your forearms parallel with the desk surface.
5. Your hands should float over the keyboard with straight, relaxed wrists. Your fingers can hang down to meet your keyboard, but your wrist position should never be inclined up or down.
6. Eyes in line with the top third of the screen.
7. Make sure to keep your knees slightly bent while standing, so they're not hyperextended or have their joints locked.

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8. To minimise leg fatigue, shift weight from one leg to the other occasionally.
9. Frequently adjust your posture throughout the working day.
10. Take frequent breaks away from your computer.
11. Stretching exercises should also be completed on a regular basis.
12. Consider the use of an anti-fatigue mat.

## General principles for workstation set-up when in seated position

1. Thighs running parallel to the ground. Hips/knees at 90°-100°.
2. Feet placed firmly on the floor.
3. Bottom positioned to the very rear of the chair to utilise the back support.
4. Back of thighs clear of the chair.
5. Lower back supported by the backrest. Backrest angled between 90°-110°.

## Resources

- [UniSA Workstation Assessment Process](#)
- Contact your Safety and Wellbeing Consultant for further information and advice - [Safety and Wellbeing Team](#)

## References

- Australian Government - Comcare. (n.d.). Benefits of Movement — Be Upstanding! Retrieved from <https://www.comcare.gov.au/about/forms-publications/documents/publications/safety/benefits-of-movement-beupstanding-factsheet.pdf>
- National Heart Foundation of Australia. (2011). Sitting less for adults. Retrieved from <https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/getmedia/88c39659-675e-44b2-9da8-b9b28b5f0c83/PA-Sitting-Less-Adults.pdf>
- Owen, N., Healy, G. N., Matthews, C. E., & Dunstan, D. W. (2010). Too much sitting: the population health science of sedentary behaviour. *Exercise and Sports Sciences Reviews*, 38(3), 105-113. doi: [10.1097/JES.0b013e3181e373a2](https://doi.org/10.1097/JES.0b013e3181e373a2)
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