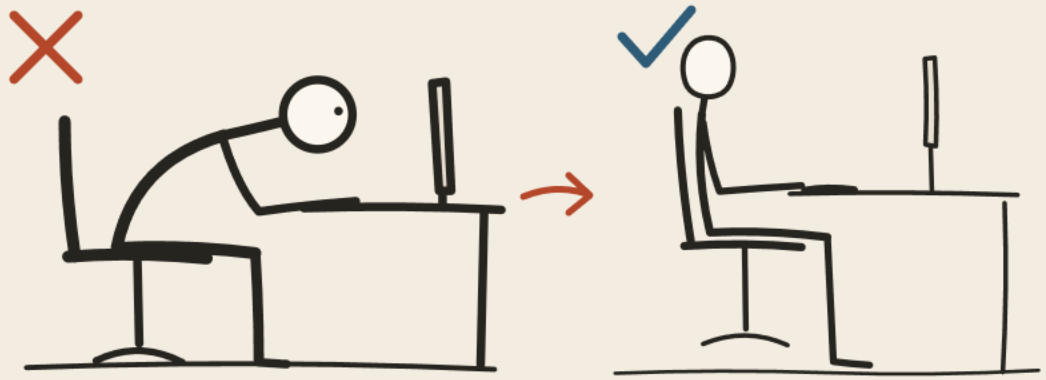
*for everyone who sits 7+ hours a day*

# Be kind to yourself at work.

Simple habits for your back, neck, wrists, eyes — and your long-term health.

*from this... to this*



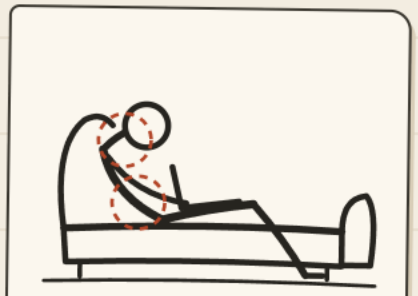
**By Arif Khan**

Software Quality Architect & Senior Project/Program Manager · imarifkhan.com

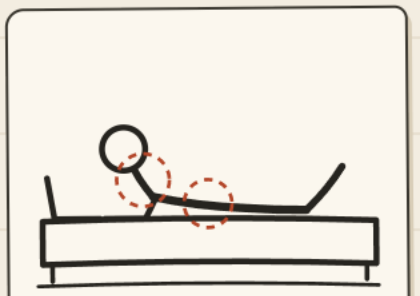
Disclaimer: General guidance, not medical advice.

# Which one are you? *be honest...*

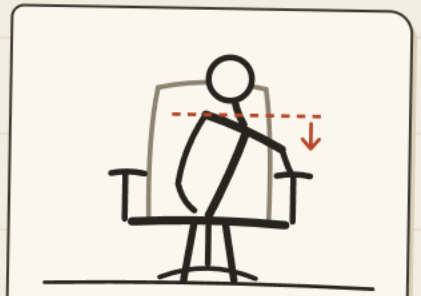
Forward head



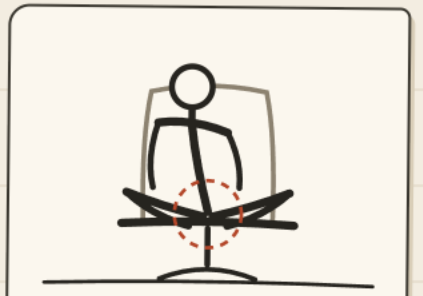
Sofa slump



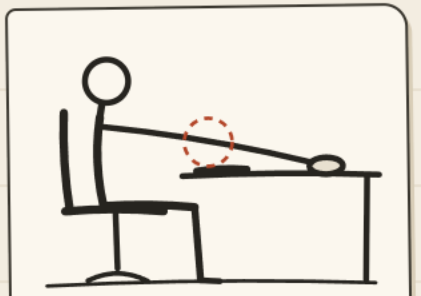
Bed typing



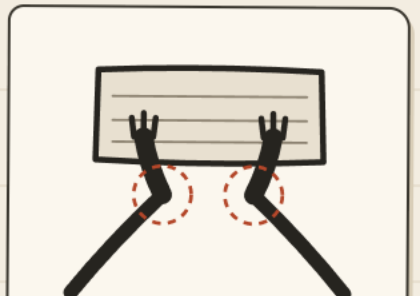
Side lean



Cross-legged



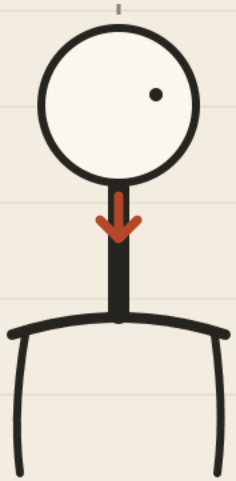
Long reach



Bent wrists

Red circles = where the strain builds up

# Forward head = heavier head

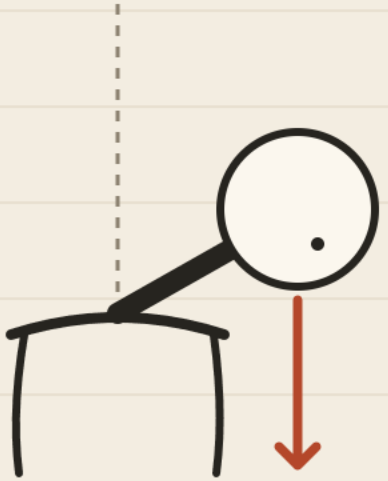


**12 lb**

*5 kg · upright*

**27 lb**

*12 kg · 15° tilt*



**60 lb**

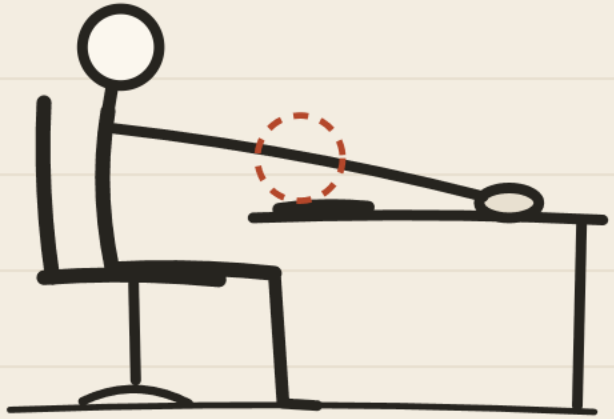
*27 kg · 60° tilt*

Source: Hansraj K., Surgical Technology International, 2014

# What it costs you

**+11°**

more neck bend on a laptop than a desktop

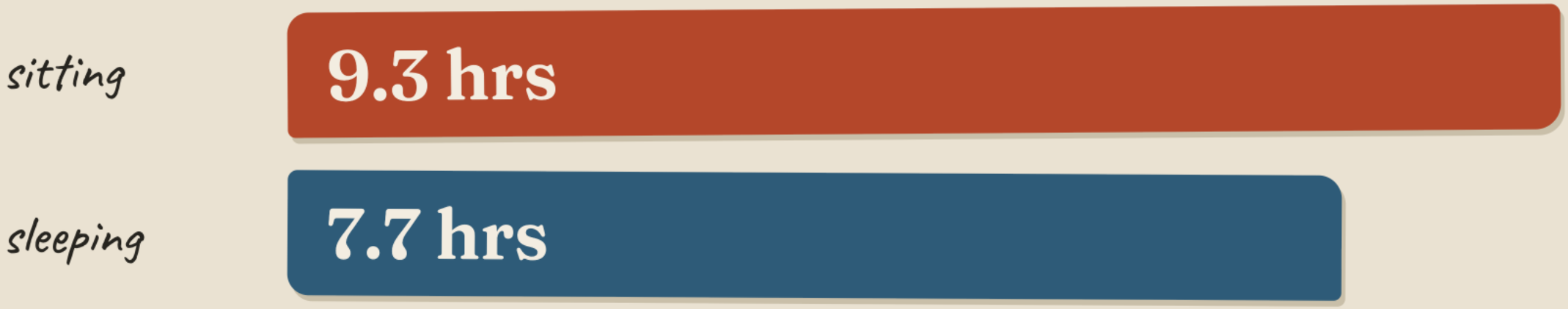


**26%**

of heavy computer users had tennis elbow

Sources: Yu et al., Work, 2018 · Lateral epicondylitis study, Lahore (JRCRS, n = 296)

# We sit more than we sleep




**Exercise alone doesn't cancel it out.**

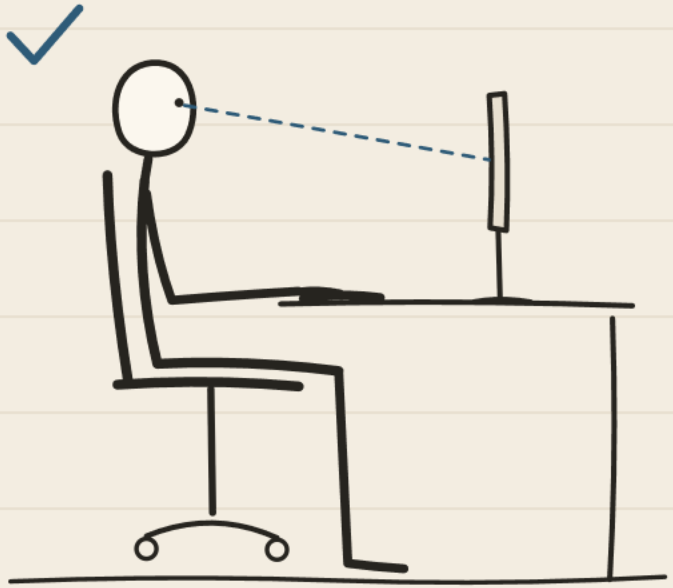
**Any movement beats none** — even slow walking.

Sources: Nilofer Merchant, TED 2013 · Buckley et al., BJSM 2015 · WHO 2020

# Spot the difference

## Slumped

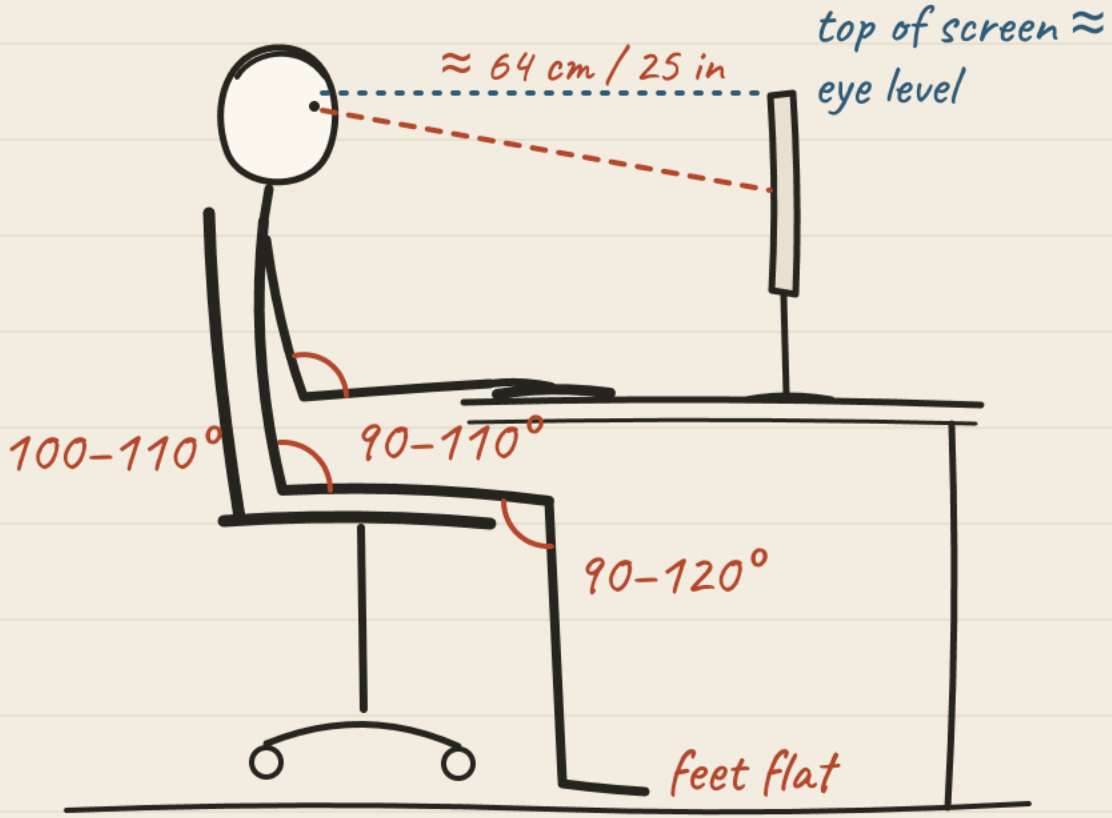
*head forward · back rounded*



## Neutral

*ears over shoulders · back supported*

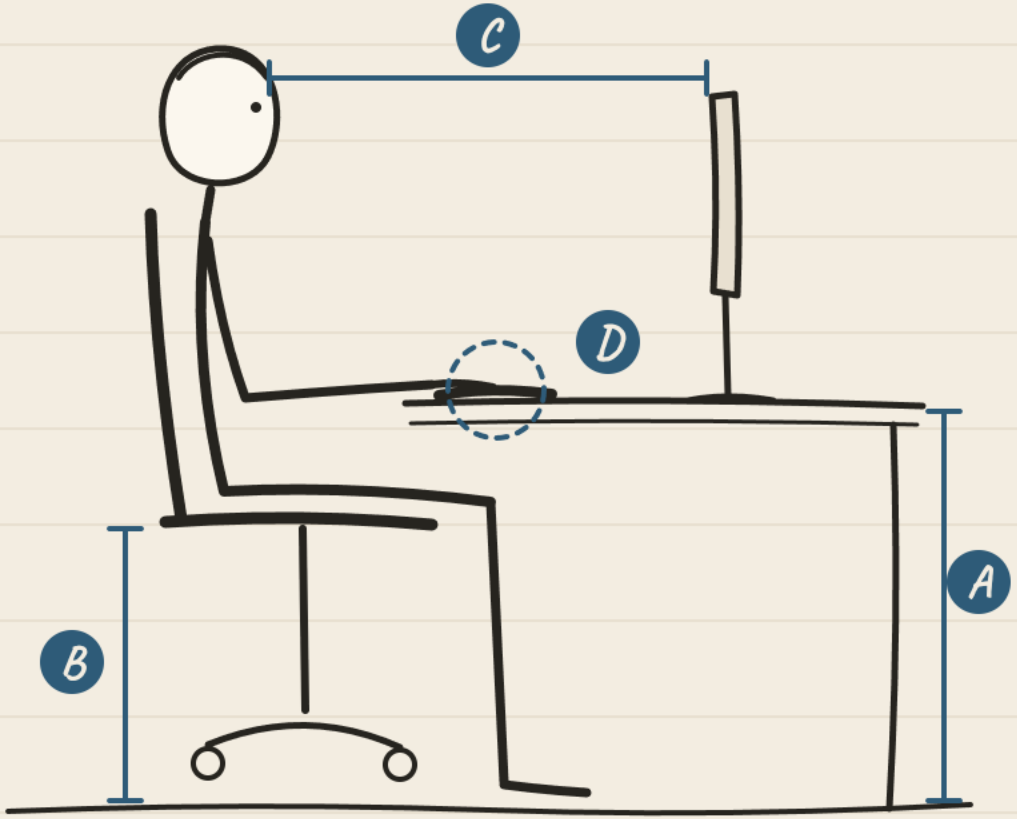
# Your body, head to toe




- Ears over shoulders
- Shoulders dropped
- Wrists flat & straight
- Hips all the way back
- Sit centered

Sources: OSHA workstation guidance · Cornell University Ergonomics Web · AAO

# Measure your desk




**A** **51–71 cm**
*desk height · 20–28 in*

**B** **38–56 cm**
*seat height · 15–22 in*

**C** **≈ 64 cm**
*eyes to screen · 25 in*

**D** **≤ elbow**
*keyboard & mouse, side by side*

*feet don't reach? add a footrest*

Sources: OSHA computer workstation eTool · Cornell University Ergonomics Web · AAO

# Fix your laptop in 3 steps

1

## Raise it

2

## Add keyboard & mouse

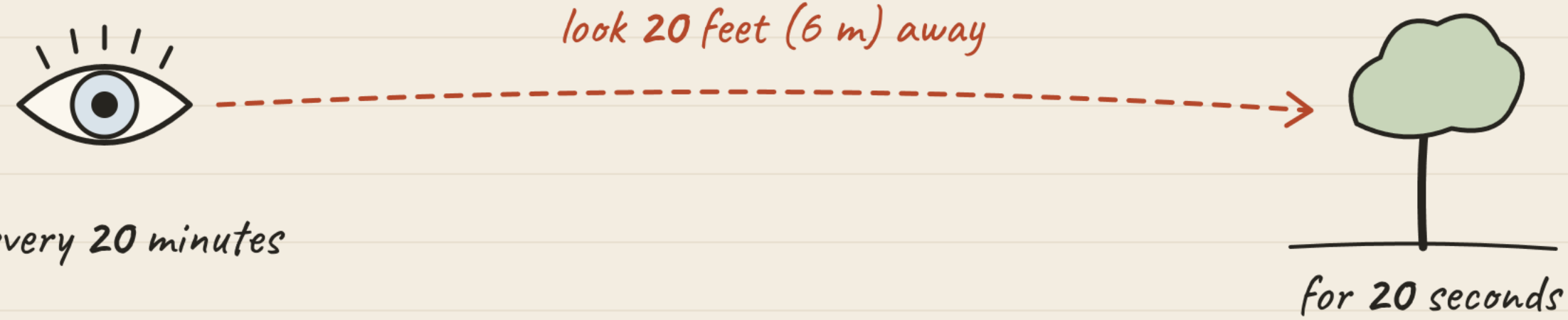
3

## Sit back

*sofa or bed? keep it short — that's where necks bend most*

Sources: Yu et al., Work, 2018 · Laptop use at a low table, sofa & bed, Work

# The 20-20-20 rule




- ✓ Blink often
- ✓ Screen at arm's length
- ⚠ Blue-light glasses: not needed

Sources: American Academy of Ophthalmology · American Optometric Association

*the one habit to keep*

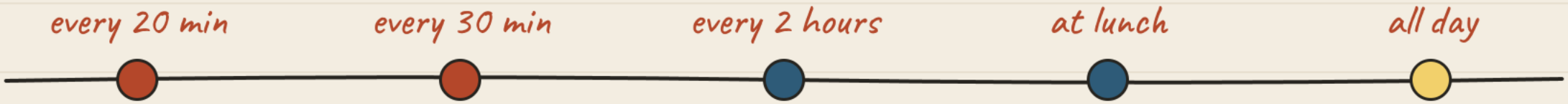
# Every 30 minutes, walk for 5.

**58%**

smaller blood-sugar spikes after meals

Source: Diaz et al., Columbia University, 2023 — small lab study, 11 adults

# Your day, in rhythm




**Look away**
20 seconds, 6 m off

**Walk 5 min**
water, stairs, stretch

**Real break**
10–15 minutes

**Off-screen**
eat, then walk outside

**Stand more**
build to 2 hrs, then 4

*+ every week: 150–300 minutes of brisk walking or similar*

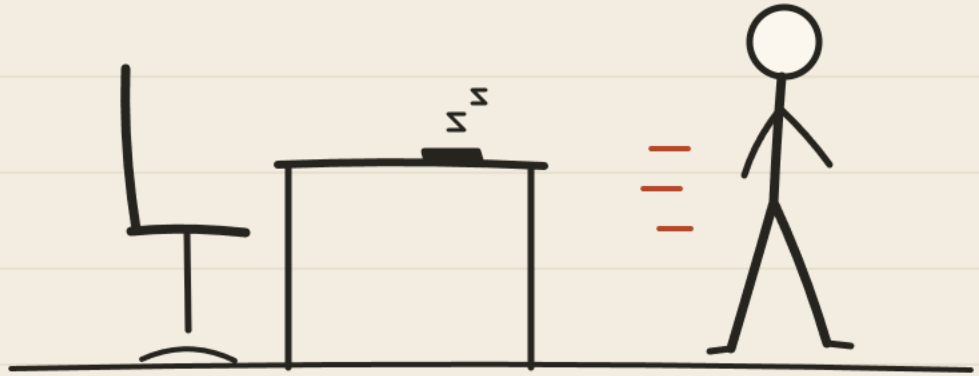
Sources: AAO · Columbia 2023 · Albulescu et al. 2022 · Buckley et al. 2015 · WHO 2020

# Unplug & be present

**47%**

of waking hours, our minds wander

*"a wandering mind is an unhappy mind"*



- Phone stays on the desk
- Take 1:1 calls walking
- Hard stop at day's end

Sources: Killingsworth & Gilbert, Science 2010 · Nilofer Merchant, TED 2013

# Cheat sheet *screenshot it · stick it up*

## Set up once

- ☐ Screen at eye level
- ☐ Keyboard at elbow height
- ☐ Feet flat, hips back
- ☐ Laptop raised + keyboard

## Every day

- ☐ 20-20-20 for your eyes
- ☐ Walk 5 min every 30
- ☐ Wrists straight, sit centered
- ☐ Phone stays put on breaks

*pain lasting weeks? see a physiotherapist or doctor*

# References & further watching


**1.** OSHA — Computer Workstations eTool (desk, chair, monitor guidance).

**2.** Cornell University Ergonomics Web, Prof. Alan Hedge — 12 tips for an ergonomic workstation.

**3.** American Academy of Ophthalmology — 20-20-20 rule and screen-use guidance.

**4.** Hansraj K. (2014). Assessment of stresses in the cervical spine. Surgical Technology International.

**5.** Yu Z. et al. (2018). Posture with tablet, laptop and desktop. Work 61(2).

**6.** Laptop use at a low table, sofa and bed. Work.

**7.** Lateral epicondylitis among computer users, Lahore. JRCRS.

**8.** Forearm and palm supports during mouse use. Applied Ergonomics (2014).

**9.** Atroshi I. et al. (2008). Carpal tunnel syndrome and computer use. BMC Musculoskelet Disord.

**10.** Asymmetric sitting postures during a mouse task (n = 60).

**11.** Diaz K. et al. (2023). Walking breaks study. Columbia University.

**12.** Buckley J.P. et al. (2015). The sedentary office. Br J Sports Med 49(21).

**13.** WHO (2020). Guidelines on Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour.

**14.** Albulescu P. et al. (2022). Micro-breaks meta-analysis. PLOS ONE 17(8).

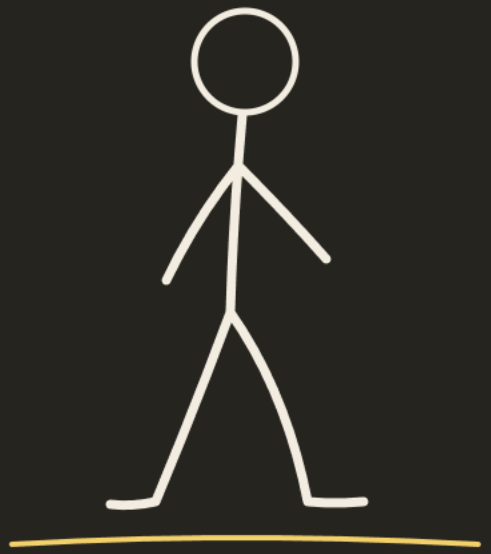
**15.** Killingsworth M. & Gilbert D. (2010). A wandering mind is an unhappy mind. Science.

**16.** TED: Nilofer Merchant, Got a meeting? Take a walk · TED-Ed: Murat Dalkilinç, Why sitting is bad for you.

*so, from today —*

# Be kind to yourself at work.

Sit well. Move often. Look up.



*made with care by*

**Arif Khan**

Software Quality Architect & Senior Project/Program Manager

imarifkhan.com

**General guidance, not medical advice. Ongoing pain? See a physiotherapist or doctor.**