

This leaflet explains about how to sit at your computer comfortably, without making your aches and pains worse. If you have any questions, please call us. Our telephone number is 020 7813 8541.



Chronic fatigue syndrome and using your computer

Information for young people

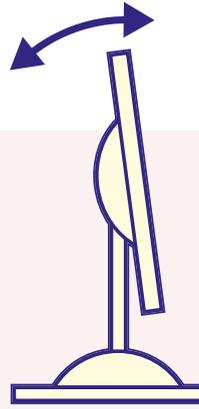
Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust

Sitting at your computer

When you have chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS/ME), using a computer can seem like a lifeline. You can email your friends and keep up to date on news. It's really important to set up your computer so that it is in the right position. This will reduce your chances of having headaches or muscle aches.

Getting your computer space organised

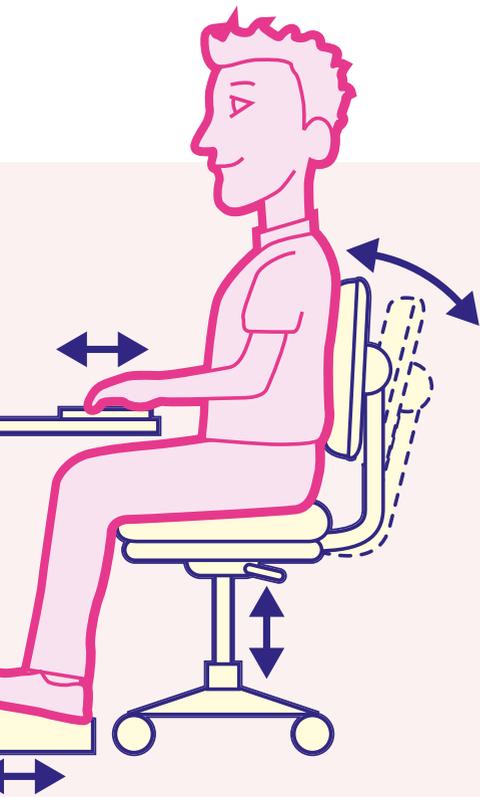
Most people sit at a computer in a poor position, with hunched shoulders, chin poked forward, back bent and arms stretched. Adjusting your computer space and sitting at it correctly will be more comfortable in the long run. Remember that you will probably need to make adjustments each time you use the computer. Everyone in your family is likely to be a different height.



Look at this picture – this is the ideal position you should work towards.

- Arrange the computer so that you're looking straight at the monitor and the keyboard is in front of you. The mouse should only be a short distance from the keyboard, so don't stretch to reach it
- Your feet should be flat on the floor, or if you can't reach, use a footstep
- Your hips and knees should be at right angles
- You should sit upright with some support behind your lower back
- The desk or table should be the right height so that when you're sitting comfortably, your shoulders should be relaxed and your elbows level with the surface
- When using the keyboard, keep your hands and wrists flat and on the same level
- The monitor screen should be level with your eyes





Keeping moving

It's easy to sit at your computer for hours without moving, but you will feel stiff and sore if you do. Make sure you get up and move around every 20 minutes or so. You don't have to leave the computer for long, just long enough to do a few stretches, wriggle your legs and toes or maybe go to get a drink or snack.

Stretches

You can do these stretches sitting in your chair. They can help keep your neck and shoulders loose. Hold each movement for 10 seconds and repeat three times.

- Tilt your left ear towards your left shoulder
- Tilt your right ear towards your right shoulder
- Tilt your chin down towards your chest
- Turn your head to look over your right shoulder
- Turn your head to look over your left shoulder
- Make a double chin
- Roll your shoulders backwards and forwards
- Holding the chair with your right hand, tilt your head to the left so that you are looking at your left hip and thigh
- Holding the chair with your left hand, tilt your head to the right so that you are looking at your right hip and thigh

If you have any questions,
please ring the CFS/ME team on 020 7813 8541.



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