



5 Health and Safety Practices for Working From Home

Recent years have seen a notable rise in remote work, even as certain pandemic-era trends have begun to subside. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, almost a quarter of the nation's workforce utilizes remote or hybrid arrangements. When working from home, you're responsible for maintaining your own workspace. That's why it's important to be mindful of ways to address possible health- and safety-related issues.

Without proper precautions in place, you could be increasingly susceptible to various occupational injuries and illnesses, including musculoskeletal disorders, digital eyestrain, insomnia, anxiety and depression. In fact, multiple studies have shown a significant increase in stiff necks, sore shoulders, lower back pain and wrist strain among remote workers when compared to their in-office counterparts.

What's more, the National Council on Compensation Insurance reported that injury rates among employees have jumped by an estimated 24% to 54% over the past few years, largely due to musculoskeletal- and mental health-related claims. In light of these findings, it's clear that remote work exposures must be taken seriously. As such, consider the following best practices while working from home:

1. **Establish good ergonomics.** Arrange an optimal work-from-home area where you can efficiently and comfortably complete tasks. Think about the placement of your chair, desk and screens, and limit situations where you may have to reach or strain to access equipment or paperwork.

2. **Take breaks.** Even while at the office, employees shouldn't spend eight straight hours sitting at their desks. Give yourself regular breaks to stand, stretch, rest your eyes and move around a bit. Taking a walk outdoors can be especially beneficial.
3. **Limit hazards.** Working remotely may introduce or enhance risks in your home. For example, be careful not to overload electrical outlets or create tripping hazards with power strips and extension cords.
4. **Set boundaries.** Try to maintain a healthy work-life balance by deciding on and sticking to a regular sign-off time each day. Be particularly mindful of how attempting to accomplish tasks at night may disrupt your sleep patterns.
5. **Stay connected.** Remote work environments can cultivate feelings of isolation and loneliness. Make an effort to attend or organize online social events with colleagues and strike up casual conversations throughout the day.

Consult your supervisor for additional workplace health and safety tips.

Reducing the Risk of Hypothermia

Working outdoors in the winter can expose you to dangerously low temperatures. This cold weather can heighten your risk of experiencing a variety of complications, such as hypothermia.

Hypothermia can occur when your body's core temperature falls below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. This condition is typically caused by exposure to extreme cold, but it can also happen after getting drenched by rain or submerged in frigid water.

If your work requires you to spend time outdoors in cold temperatures, it's imperative to understand the risks associated with hypothermia and the necessary steps to ensure your safety.

Know the Symptoms

Knowing the warning signs of hypothermia is critical. Common symptoms include the following:

- Shivering
- Drowsiness and exhaustion
- Confusion
- Shallow breathing
- Slurred speech
- Loss of coordination
- Unconsciousness

If left ignored or improperly treated, hypothermia can be fatal.

Prevention Is Key

Implement the following safety precautions to help prevent hypothermia on the job:

- Always check the weather before working outdoors to properly prepare yourself. Try to limit your time outside if weather conditions are extremely cold, wet or windy.
- Wear several breathable, yet protective layers of clothing while you work. This includes an inner layer to keep sweat away from the skin (lightweight wool), a middle layer to warm the

body (fleece or microfiber insulation) and an outer layer that will repel wind, snow and rain (polyester or nylon). In addition to these layers, make sure you bundle up with:

- A hat that covers your head and ears
- A scarf or neck warmer
- Mittens (rather than gloves)
- Thick, wool socks
- Waterproof boots that will keep your feet properly insulated
- Be sure to eat healthy foods that are rich in carbohydrates and protein prior to working in the cold to help fuel your body. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water before, during and after your shift.

Act Fast

If you start developing any early symptoms of hypothermia, tell your supervisor and go indoors to warm up. If your condition doesn't improve, seek prompt medical care.

If a co-worker shows signs of hypothermia, move them out of the cold and inform management immediately. Remove any wet clothing that the individual is wearing and provide them with warm clothing and blankets for insulation. Be gentle with them—never rub or massage their skin in an attempt to warm them up, as this could trigger cardiac arrest.

If the individual is awake and alert, give them a warm (but not hot) beverage. Avoid offering them coffee or alcohol. If the individual is unresponsive or not breathing, call 911. Provide CPR if needed (as long as you are certified to do so).

Talk to your supervisor if you have any further questions on preventing or responding to hypothermia.



Live Well, Work Well

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Eating Real Food

Nutrition is the foundation of health, influencing disease prevention and overall well-being. Dietary habits can shape long-term health outcomes. The [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030](#), reflects the latest in nutrition science and public health needs, marking what public health officials describe as the most “significant reset” of federal nutrition policy in decades.

At its core, the new dietary guidance emphasizes a simple directive: “Eat real food.”

The 2025-2030 guidelines define real food as whole, nutrient-dense and naturally occurring, placing it back at the center of Americans’ diets. Here are some major changes to the guidelines from the previous recommendations:

- **The New Pyramid**—The latest update features an inverted pyramid that places meats, cheese and vegetables in the widest part at the top, reversing a long-standing visual representation of the American diet and shifting away from the circular MyPlate image. This flexible framework is designed to guide better choices, rather than dictating specific meals.
- **Ultra-processed foods (UPFs)**—For the first time, the guidelines specifically call out UPFs. Americans are advised to avoid packaged and

ready-to-eat foods that are salty or sweet (e.g., chips, cookies and candy) and limit foods and beverages with artificial flavors, dyes, preservatives and sweeteners.

- **Protein**—The new guidelines prioritize protein at every meal, with a goal to get 1.2 to 1.6 grams per kilogram of a person’s body weight daily, nearly double the previous advice. Americans are encouraged to obtain their protein from both animal sources (e.g., eggs, poultry, seafood and red meat) and plant-based sources (e.g., beans, peas, lentils, legumes, nuts, seeds and soy).
- **Dairy**—The updated version prioritizes full-fat dairy with no added sugars, marking a major shift from the long-standing recommendation for fat-free or low-fat milk and yogurt.
- **Added sugars**—The guidelines note that no amount of added sugar is healthy. As such, adults should limit their intake to no more than 10 grams per meal, and no amount of added sugar is suitable for children aged 5 to 10.
- **Alcohol**—The general recommendation now is to simply limit alcohol consumption without providing exact figures.

To learn more about the new dietary guidelines, visit [RealFood.gov](#). Individuals should consult with their health care provider for personalized guidance.

Understanding Vitamin D Supplements

Vitamin D is especially important during the winter because reduced sunlight exposure limits the body's ability to produce it naturally, increasing the risk of deficiency. This nutrient plays a critical role in maintaining strong bones and teeth by aiding calcium absorption, supports immune function to help fight seasonal illnesses and regulates mood.

Since shorter days and colder weather make sun exposure difficult, incorporating vitamin D-rich foods or supplements becomes essential for overall health during the winter months.

Doctors and pharmacists often recommend D₃ to individuals who need vitamin D supplements. Forms of these supplements include capsules, gummies,

liquid products, powders, and dissolving tablets. It's important to purchase high-quality supplements that have been independently tested.

While dietary supplements, including vitamin D₃, can be beneficial, they can cause harm when used unnecessarily. It's possible to get too much vitamin D. When you overdose, calcium builds up in your blood. This condition, known as hypercalcemia, can cause nausea, vomiting, weakness, decreased appetite, constipation and frequent urination. Vitamin D toxicity also has the potential to progress to irregular heart rhythms, kidney stones and even kidney failure. The Food and Drug Administration recommends that all consumers consult their doctor or pharmacist before taking supplements.

Winter Self-care Tips

Amid the chill of winter and shorter days during the colder months, it's crucial to prioritize self-care. Winter brings unique challenges, but you can thrive during this season with the right self-care practices. Such rejuvenating winter habits can leave you feeling cozy, refreshed and ready to conquer the cooler days ahead. Try these self-care tips:

- **Prioritize hydration.** The dry air can take a toll on your skin and overall well-being, so be sure to stay hydrated.
- **Nourish your body with seasonal foods.** Opt for nourishing, seasonal foods (e.g., sweet potatoes and Brussels sprouts) that support your immune system and provide comfort.
- **Move your body.** Maintaining an active lifestyle is vital to well-being, even during winter. Indoor exercises, winter sports or even a brisk walk in the cold air can invigorate your body and mind.
- **Ensure sufficient rest.** The longer nights of winter provide an excellent opportunity to

prioritize sleep. Create a relaxing bedtime routine and strive for at least seven hours of sleep each night.

- **Create a cozy sanctuary.** Enhance your living space with elements that promote warmth and relaxation, such as soft blankets, scented candles or diffusers.
- **Embrace outdoor activities.** Even in small doses, fresh air and sunlight can do wonders for your mental health.
- **Establish a relaxing evening routine.** A consistent evening routine can help signal to your body that it's time to wind down, promoting restful sleep.

Keep in mind that self-care is an ongoing process, and finding what works best for your mind and body is key to a fulfilling and balanced winter season. These tips are simply a starting point.