

# Kensington®

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## HOW TO CREATE A **PRODUCTIVE** HOME OFFICE



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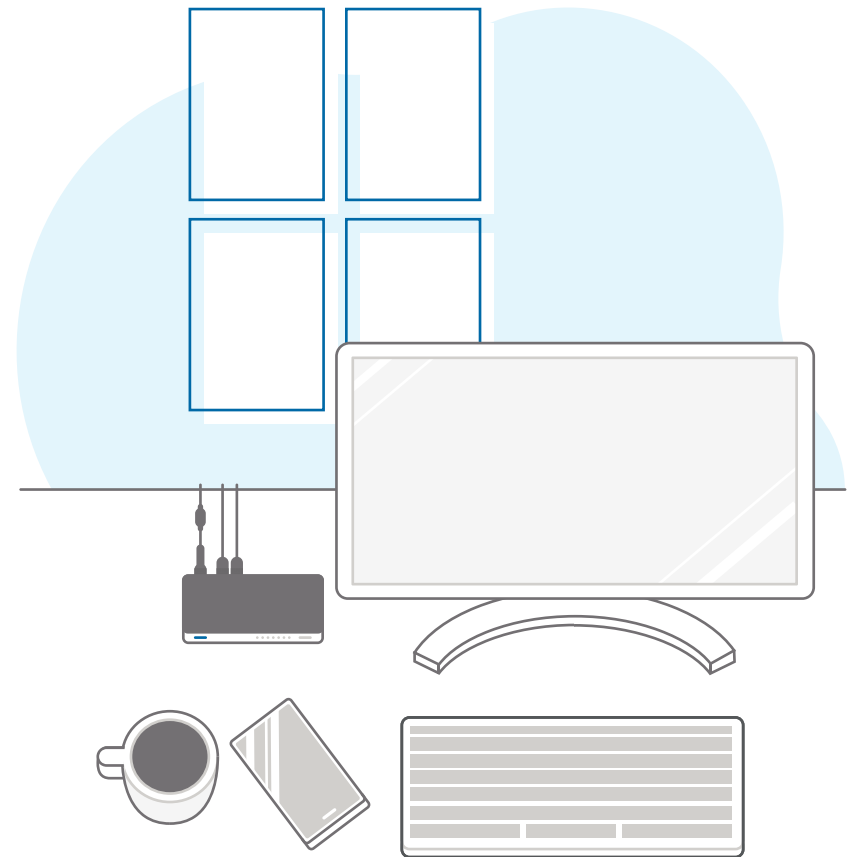
## Overview

Working from home has its perks. Positive environmental impact and improved employee satisfaction are two more obvious benefits, but working remotely has also been shown to be a productivity-booster.

Stanford Graduate School of Business conducted a recent study of a travel agency to better understand how working remotely affects productivity and found that remote workers made more calls and were 13% more productive than their in-office counterparts.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Flexjobs conducted a survey on the topic and found that almost two-thirds of respondents thought they were more productive in their home offices.<sup>2</sup>

**That last detail is key:** Creating a home office can turbocharge your WFH productivity. It doesn't have to be a full-fledged replica of a corporate workspace, just a setup that's physically comfortable, sufficiently quiet, and generally easy to work in for extended periods. Implemented the right way, it can be a huge upgrade from setting up shop on the couch or in a recliner.

**Let's look at how to build a home office that works for you.**



<sup>1</sup> [www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/why-working-home-future-looking-technology](http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/why-working-home-future-looking-technology)  
<sup>2</sup> [www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/survey-flexible-work-job-choices/](http://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/survey-flexible-work-job-choices/)

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## Pick the Right Location

Noise is the top workplace distraction, with 80% of respondents to a Udem survey citing it as a recurring problem.<sup>3</sup> WFH might seem to have a natural advantage here (i.e., fewer people in the same physical space), but in practice there are still many potential issues, from children wanting attention to ambient street noise.

Start by picking the quietest space possible and one with sufficient lighting. A nearby window can help, although be mindful of possible screen glare in the afternoon, as well as a good lamp.

### Next, follow these steps:

- Select your workspace surface. If you don't have a desk, a simple table is fine. Just make sure you have enough space to perform your essential tasks.
- Set up some specific objects that indicate that the area is “for work” and help you get into the right mindset. Plants, decor, and divider screens can all help. House plants are also a nice touch in the background of video conferences.
- Bring in some office furniture like filing cabinets and desk organizers to keep your workspace orderly. Clutter is a big visual and mental distraction, after all.
- Consider using noise-cancelling headphones to minimize certain sounds, such as nearby conversations and engines.



**WFH Pro Tip:** If you have a doorbell and a dog, put a note telling delivery drivers and mail carriers not to ring it—barking is a guaranteed conference call disrupter.

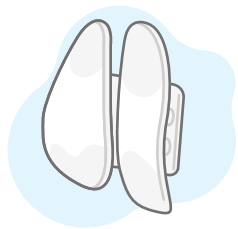
<sup>3</sup> [research.udemy.com/research\\_report/udemy-depth-2018-workplace-distraction-report/](https://research.udemy.com/research_report/udemy-depth-2018-workplace-distraction-report/)

# Focus on Ergonomics

Working from home doesn't shield you from the danger of workplace injuries. On the contrary, prolonged sitting can put you at risk of various musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), such as ones related to awkward positioning or repetitive actions. One-third of all workplace injuries and illnesses are MSDs.<sup>4</sup>

To avoid injury and discomfort, focus on keeping your major joints (i.e., knees, hips, and elbows) at 90-degree angles and your screens at eye level.

## Ergonomic solutions can help here:



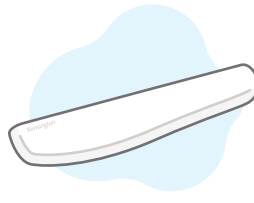
### Chairs, backrests and cushions

An ergonomic chair should consistently reduce the symptoms from MSDs.<sup>5</sup> Even if you do not have a formal ergonomic chair, you can make a regular chair into one using an ergonomic backrest and/or seat cushion.



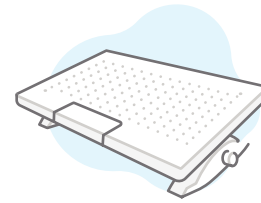
### Keyboards, mice and trackballs

Consider an ergonomic keyboard for a more comfortable typing experience. Ergonomic mice and trackballs provide similar relief, with less soft tissue compression and fewer/more natural hand motions required.



### Wrist rests

Keyboards and mice lift your hand off your work surface, but too often result in your hand unnaturally bending backward. Wrist rests are designed to position your hands, wrists, and forearms in a more neutral position.



### Foot rests

Foot rests are not only for your feet to rest on, but they also help you sit back in your chair and take tension out of your lower back and upper legs.



### Laptop and monitor risers and arms

Suboptimal viewing angles hurt your neck and strain your eyes. Risers and arms let you put your laptop and monitor(s) in optimal eye level positions.

<sup>4</sup> [www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/osh2.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/osh2.pdf)  
<sup>5</sup> [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3552974/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3552974/)

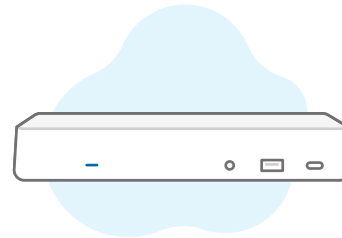
# Unlock the Power of Your Laptop

Placing your laptop or tablet on top of a dedicated desk or table is a good starting point for a home office, but with the right accessories you can enjoy a full desktop experience from your mobile computer.



## Monitors

External displays give you much more screen real estate for multitasking between apps, using collaboration tools, and working with complex documents like spreadsheets. A Jon Peddie Research study found that adding an extra monitor could boost productivity by over 40%.<sup>6</sup> One or two high-quality monitors is a worthwhile investment, not just for the increased efficiency but for the ergonomic benefits, too.



## Docking stations

Connecting to additional monitors requires access to video ports. Starting in the 2010s, a lot of laptops began removing connectors such as HDMI, VGA, and DisplayPort, and opting for the versatility of USB-C and Thunderbolt 3™. Despite this downsizing, it's possible to turn any PC or Mac into a desktop powerhouse with a docking station, which can connect your device to:

- Additional HD or UHD monitors.
- External hard disk drives.
- Wired Gigabit Ethernet.
- USB mice and keyboards.
- Charging/power.



## Accessories

Laptop accessories are helpful additions to many workflows. Full size external keyboards in particular are good because they have more key travel (i.e., deeper depression with each stroke, for greater comfort) than the built-in keys on ultrathin PCs and Macs. USB hubs can come in handy when your computer is short on USB ports and you have multiple USB peripherals to connect



**WFH Pro Tip:** A large HDD is advisable if you work with lots of files, particularly ones you don't need to access daily. Offloading them onto the HDD will free up the faster onboard SSD or NVMe flash on your laptop.

<sup>6</sup> [www.jonpeddie.com/press-releases/jon-peddie-research-multiple-displays-can-increase-productivity-by-42/](https://www.jonpeddie.com/press-releases/jon-peddie-research-multiple-displays-can-increase-productivity-by-42/)

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# Get the Most From Your Internet Connection

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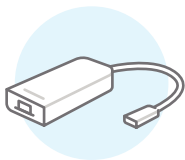
A slow or unstable internet connection can rapidly reduce your productivity to zero. So how can you make sure your network is fast enough, even if your home internet plan isn't top-tier?

## Location, location, location

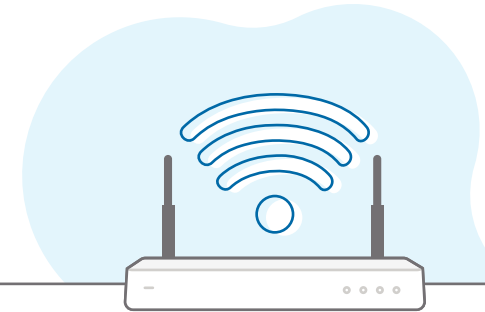
It's as true of wireless connectivity as it is of real estate—location matters. Put your router in a relatively high position (like on top of a table or bookshelf) so that it's not impeded by furniture and/or walls.

## Get wired

Ethernet might seem old-fashioned and office-y, but it provides the most stable connection possible—an invaluable benefit when on a VoIP call or video conference, for instance. Try an Ethernet-to-USB adapter or a docking station if your laptop lacks a built-in RJ45 jack.



**WFH Pro Tip:** Try a 2.5 Gbps Ethernet adapter for the best performance. Also, Thunderbolt 3 and USB-C ports deliver better Ethernet speeds than USB-A, which often can't handle more than Fast Ethernet (100/10 Mbps).



## Try a mesh network

With proper placement, mesh solutions such as Google Nest Wi-Fi provide a consistently strong connection, even across a large space. Mesh routers and points/satellites typically include Ethernet ports as well.

## Adjust QoS settings

This one's a little more involved, but you can check to see what Quality of Service (QoS) settings your router contains. Configuring QoS gives priority to certain types of traffic so that you can more easily avoid network bottlenecks.

## Evaluate different service plans

Not every locale has multiple internet options available. But if yours does, it might be worth the extra money to upgrade your speeds to support extended or full-time WFH. If applicable, fiber-optic internet is also preferable to cable, due to symmetrical bandwidth and more consistent performance.

Kensington is here to help you create  
the right home office for your needs.

[Click here to learn more.](#)



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