

HOME STUDY ENVIRONMENT

The ideal conditions for your home study environment are as follows:

QUIET/PRIVATE: It is important that you have a space that allows you to focus and have quiet periods when necessary. Some students find this difficult to achieve at home and have found that staying after school for an hour or so and working in the school library is one way of dealing with this situation. Others find a local library near home and do their more difficult work there before going home. Some students place a sign on their door when they need quiet time or else the family agrees together when the quiet periods will be.

DISTRACTION FREE: We all intend to be strong when trying to deal with distractions but the reality is that willpower is rarely enough. It is much better if temptation is removed. In the periods when you are working on schoolwork, turn off Facebook, Instagram, close all Social Media, turn off your mobile phone and remove all distractions like iPod – not for the whole night, just the blocks of time when you are focusing on schoolwork. See the Dealing with Distractions section for more information.

MUSIC: You can listen to music if you are doing work that doesn't require much effort or concentration. However, if you are doing anything that is difficult, requires effort, requires you to think, understand or remember information you should switch the music off. If you try and study for a test while music is on, you may not think it is having an effect on you but it is actually going to take you much longer to learn and remember the information. The only music that helps your ability to concentrate or focus is baroque music (a type of classical music) playing softly in the background. So this type of music is fine to have on while you are studying, in fact it is better than silence!

COMPUTERS IN BEDROOMS: The general rule is that if you are not very self-disciplined, and find it hard to resist the attractions of the computer, then keep the computer in a public space in the house or work in this space where people are more likely to notice you getting distracted from your work ie going to other sites when you are supposed to be working on an essay!

SUPPORTIVE CHAIR: It is really important that you have a comfortable and supportive chair. The chair you use should be comfortable (but not so comfy you fall asleep like an armchair) and adjustable to reduce strain on your neck and shoulders. Your feet should sit flat on the floor with your legs at a 90 degree angle to the knee. There should be support in the small of your back and your forearms should sit flat on the desk. Considering the amount of time you are going to spend studying, it is a great idea if your parents can buy you a proper adjustable office chair.

GOOD LIGHTING: Natural light is preferable, but not always available. If you need to have a light on you should have both your room light and a desk lamp on. Try and avoid fluorescent lights. Have the desk lamp situated so the light is shining onto your work, not into your eyes.

CLEAR WORKSPACE: A cluttered workspace means you will waste time looking for things and become distracted by the bits and pieces in front of you. A clear workspace sets the tone for the way you will approach your work. It is best if you have a large space to work on. Take out the work you need for the current task then put that work away before getting the work out for the next task.

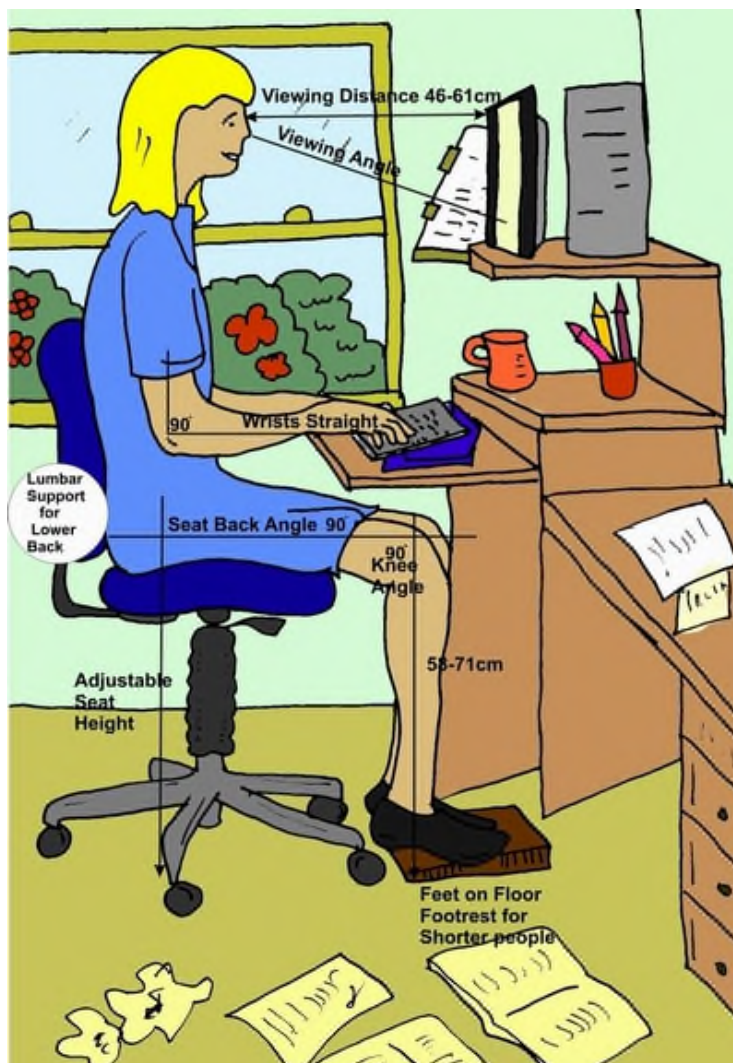
STORAGE: You need somewhere to keep your past and current work for each subject in an organized manner. Some students use shelves in their rooms, other students use a cupboard or plastic tubs for storage or even a filing cabinet. Keep all the work and books for each subject together. Also have somewhere you can keep the current things you need to work on like assignments in easy reach.

NOTICEBOARD: A large pinboard and calendar are great to help keep important pieces of paper handy and important dates in your focus.

VENTILATION: It is important to have fresh air and oxygen flowing into your room to help keep you mentally alert. If you are unable to open your window then take regular breaks where you walk outside and get some fresh air.

ERGONOMICS: Ergonomics in the home study environment is mainly about making sure that the space where you work and the equipment you are using work well for you and your body's needs.

It is about making sure that the environment is safe, comfortable, easy to use and helps you work to the best of your ability with the minimum amount of stress or discomfort.



COLOUR: The colours you choose to have around you can impact how you are feeling. Red is stimulating and can give you energy, try wearing red underwear or putting assignments in red folders. Blue is calming and peaceful and will help when you are feeling stressed or mentally fatigued. Try having a blue object on your desk when you are working. Yellow helps brain function and stimulates your mind, try a yellow study desk or a yellow section of the wall in your study. Green soothes nerves and is good to focus on before an exam or while you are working on the computer, great to have a plant in your room. Orange is all about communication and expressing yourself. If you have to write an essay or motivate yourself to action try wearing orange.



*So what could you do to
improve your own
home study environment?*



**Enhanced Learning
Educational Services**
"the study skills specialist"