

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY · ERGONOMICS

VITS

Work surface height

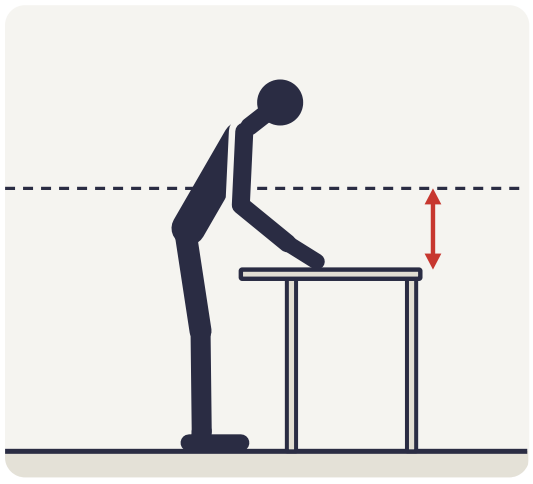
A work surface too low makes you stoop; one too high raises your shoulders. **In Europe, about one in two workers reports back pain or shoulder and arm pain.**

Possible consequences

- Back pain
- Neck and shoulder pain
- Muscle fatigue
- Swollen legs
- Varicose veins
- Less able to work

WORK SURFACE TOO LOW

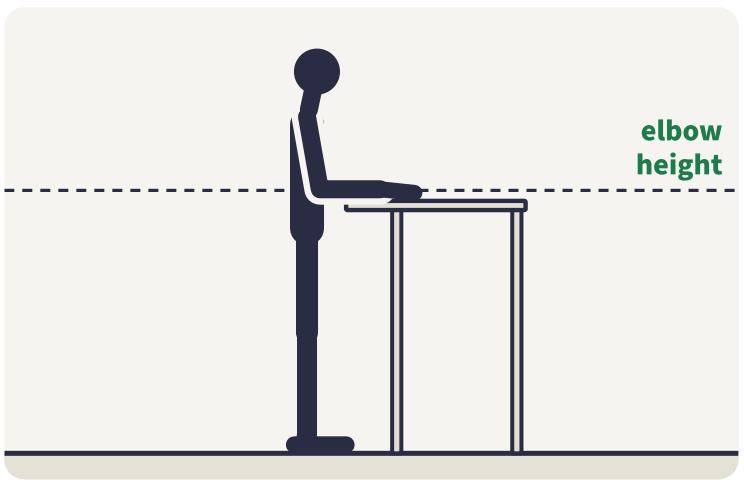
Stooping



- Upper body leans forward
- Head is bent down
- Back and neck are tense

AT ELBOW HEIGHT

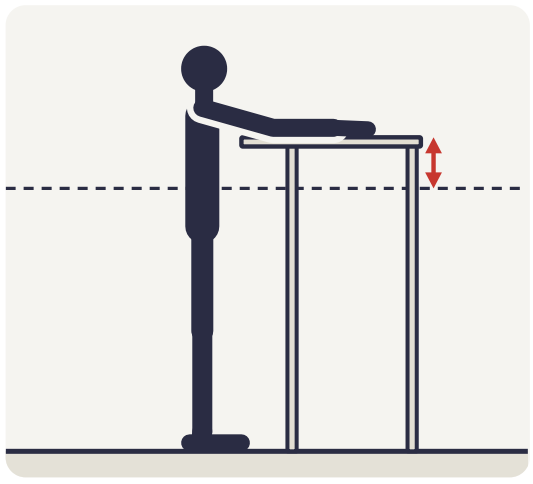
Straight back



- Precision work: 10–20 cm above elbow
- Free arm movement: just below elbow
- Heavy work: 10–30 cm below elbow

WORK SURFACE TOO HIGH

Shoulders up



- Elbows are raised
- Hands at chest height
- Shoulder muscles are tense

The layout of the chair and desk or work surface must allow the worker an ergonomically correct posture.

DO

- **Set the work surface to your elbow height.**
- **Put small parts on a raised base.**
- **Keep elbows close and shoulders relaxed.**
- **Keep tools and materials within reach.**
- **Leave 15 cm of foot space under the surface.**
- **Alternate often between sitting and standing.**
- **Use a sit-stand stool at times.**
- **Stand on an anti-fatigue mat for long tasks.**

DON'T

- **Don't constantly work stooped**
  Leaning forward puts extra strain on your back and neck.
- **Don't work with arms raised**
  Shoulder muscles tire and can start to ache.
- **Don't twist to reach things**
  Twisting your body can cause back pain and injury.
- **Don't stand on one leg**
  Hip joint load can equal 2.5 times your body weight.
- **Don't work at a height set for someone else**
  The work height must suit your own height.
- **Don't stand still for hours**
  Prolonged standing can cause swollen legs and varicose veins.
- **Don't stand in unsuitable footwear**
  Wrong footwear can cause back and leg pain.

REMEMBER

Elbow height. Straight back. Change position.

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