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SMART SPENDING

SMART TECH

Work stations

Safety and comfort are top priorities

Do you ever get a sore neck or back while using your computer? If so, there's a fair chance you haven't set up your personal workspace properly. Lots of us spend several hours a day slumped in a chair, eyes glued to a PC, which isn't ideal for our bodies. But while we might not be able to change the circumstances of 9-to-5 work (sigh!), we can at least modify our environment to make sure it's healthy, safe and comfortable.

The most common mistake people make is probably also the easiest to fix: the angle at which we stare at our computer screen. Your eyes should be level with the monitor, so your neck doesn't need to incline towards it. You can easily raise desktop displays by repurposing an old Yellow Pages or two, but for laptops you might want to consider a stand.

In addition you should sit up straight, with your knees at a right angle and forearms horizontal with the desk. Think of the Tetris piece with the kink in the middle (that's you). PETER DOCKRILL



What is it? Ikea Bräda
How much? \$8.99

Pros: The Bräda is a simple plastic stand designed to raise your notebook's display up to a better height on your desk. It's got a rubber underside to prevent slipping and supports laptops up to 17 inches. For tablet users, Ikea also has a great little stand called the Isberget for just \$1.99, although our favourite tablet stand is the Nest by Bluelounge.

Cons: A \$9 piece of plastic isn't a magic bullet for ergonomic problems, but it's a start.

ikea.com/au

What is it? Rain Design mStand

How much? \$79.95

Pros: Offering a better height and substantially more style, the slick-looking mStand (pictured) certainly packs the wow factor. It's designed with MacBooks in mind but will hold any laptop. One benefit of the elevated design is it frees up desk space and ostensibly cools your notebook. The quoted price is from the Apple Store but you may be able to do better online.

Cons: Not easily portable, and the angle isn't adjustable.

raindesigninc.com

What is it? Varidesk

How much? From \$385

Pros: Taking things a step further (literally), standing desks have become popular in recent years thanks to research showing that prolonged sitting is no good for us. Varidesk offers a range of configurable desks and workstations that enable you to alternate between sitting down and standing up during the day.

Cons: Expensive, and your body may take time to adapt. But it also could thank you in the long run.

au.varidesk.com