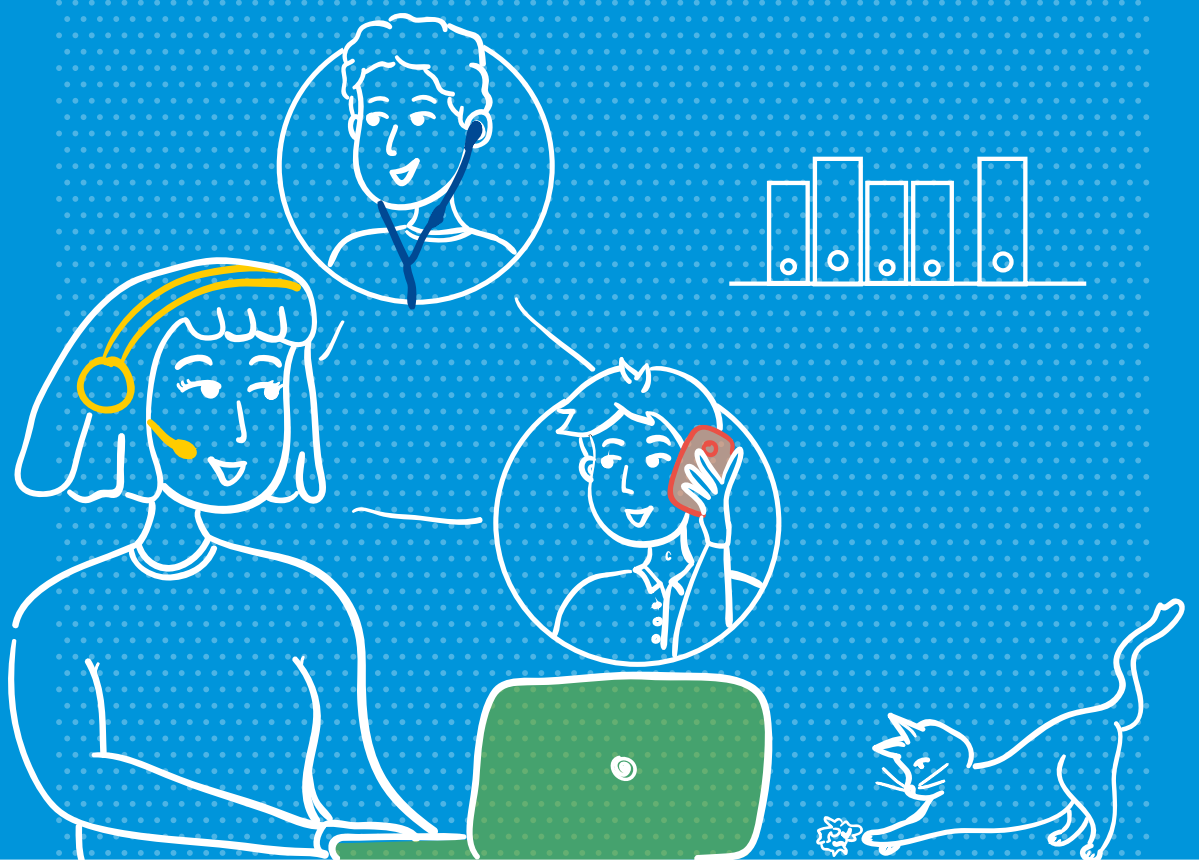


Long version

# Work from home CHECKLIST



Working from home is a particular type of remote working. Upon prior agreement with their employer, employees perform their roles in a private setting on a temporary or occasional basis. In principle, remote work is subject to the regulations of the German occupational safety and health act (ArbSchG) and the German Working Hours Act (ArbZG). There are currently no specific regulations as there are with contractually agreed telecommuting work [1].

This checklist serves as a guide for employees to help them make their

home working environment safe and healthy and can be used as an aid for the assessment of working conditions and for instruction purposes. If requirements are not met, suitable measures should be agreed with the relevant supervisor.

The checklist is also available as a short version in A3 format.

[www.dguv.de/publikationen](http://www.dguv.de/publikationen)

## Work equipment

### Display

Large, anti-glare display (at least 17" LCD display<sup>1</sup>) is available.

*The size of the display should be appropriate for the work assignment. If a laptop is used for long periods, a sufficiently large display (at least 15") is recommended.<sup>1</sup>*

Display is slightly lower than eye level.

*A separate display is the preferred option. When using a laptop with a screen size smaller than 15", a laptop stand may be useful. In this case, an additional mouse and keyboard is absolutely required.*

Distance between eyes and screen is 50–80 cm.

*Capital letters should be 3.2–4.5 mm tall at a viewing distance of 50 cm and 5.2–7.3 mm tall at a viewing distance of 80 cm.<sup>1</sup>*

Characters are displayed black on a light background (positive polarity).

*Positive polarity improves the legibility of the characters, reduces interference from unavoidable reflections and glare and means that the eyes do not have to constantly adapt to different brightness levels (screen and surroundings).*

When working in the evening, night light mode is activated two hours before bed at the latest.

*Computer screens emit light in the blue light wavelength range, which increases alertness. Late in the evening, this can have a negative effect on sleep. In night light mode (under "Settings"), it is possible to set times when this blue light is reduced.*

### Keyboard, mouse and headset

Separate keyboard and mouse are available.

*The use of a laptop without separate input devices is possible for short periods. From an ergonomics perspective, a separate monitor, keyboard and mouse are preferable in order to enable a flexible working space set-up, even for temporary work-from-home assignments.*

Distance from keyboard to desk edge is 10–15 cm.

*The heels of your hands should be resting on the desk in front of the keyboard to relieve the shoulder and neck muscles.*

Keyboard has an anti-glare surface.

Keyboard has light keys with dark symbols.<sup>[2]</sup>

*Keyboards with light keys and dark symbols (positive polarity) are more legible and mean that the eyes do not have to adapt to different brightness levels. Furthermore, dark keyboards tend to develop an unpleasant shine after prolonged use.*

Mouse can be used with a relaxed posture and arm position.

*The mouse is close to your body; shoulders are relaxed by the side of the body.*

Headset is available when required.

*The headset should be easy to adjust for the user and should offer good voice quality and good sound.*

### Technical requirements

– if necessary for work assignments

Fast, powerful internet connection is available.

Software and hardware are available for online meetings.

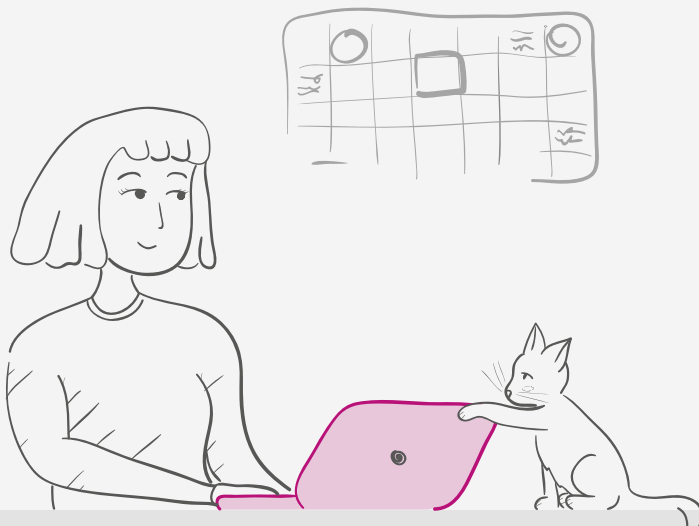
Access to server is available.

Technical support is provided in good time, if required.

### Arrangement of work equipment at the workstation

Frequently used equipment is set up in the central field of view.

*This avoids awkward head movements and postures.*



## Workstation

### Desk

Desk and screen are positioned to avoid disruptive reflections and glare; daylight is coming from the side.

*Setting up a screen with a window behind you is to be avoided, because this can cause glare. If the screen has a window behind it, the brightness contrast between the screen and the background will be too great.*

Sufficient working space is available.

- » optimal<sup>2</sup> – 160 cm x 80 cm
- » functional<sup>3</sup> – 120 cm x 80 cm
- » minimal<sup>4</sup> – 80 cm x 60 cm

*Additional work surfaces, e.g. additional desks, can increase the working space.*

The desk height is correct when it allows the elbows to form a right angle with the desk top while the forearms are resting on it. In this position, shoulders and upper arms should be relaxed.

- » optimal<sup>2</sup> – height-adjustable
- » functional<sup>3</sup>/minimal<sup>4</sup> – not height-adjustable (74 ± 2 cm)

*When the desk height is not adjustable, the desk chair must be adjusted to suit the height of the desk (forearms form a right angle with the upper arms when resting on the desk). In some cases, smaller persons may require a foot stool and larger persons may require a higher table. If both the desk chair and the desk are height-adjustable, start by adjusting the chair height and then the desk height. For occasional working while standing, other suitable furniture can be used as a “standing desk”.*

Sufficient forward/lateral leg space available.

- » optimal<sup>2</sup> – 120 cm x 80 cm
- » functional<sup>3</sup> – at least 85 cm x 80 cm
- » minimal<sup>4</sup> – at least 60 cm x 60 cm

*Objects such as bags, shoes and paper bins should be cleared away and cables safely routed.*

### Desk chair (optimal<sup>2</sup>)

Swivel desk chair has five wheels, adapted to the floor.

*Five wheels ensure sufficient stability. Wheels for hard floors (e.g. parquet) have a soft coating (soft wheel - two-tone); wheels for soft floors (e.g. carpet) have a hard outer layer (hard wheel - single colour).*

Active sitting is possible due to moveable backrest.

*To ensure comfortable movement of the backrest in synchrony with one's body, the desk chair should be adjusted to one's bodyweight – if such a mechanism is available.*

Seat depth is adjustable and the full seat surface is used.

*The distance between the front edge of the seat and the lower leg should be around a hand's width.*

Seat height is adjusted – feet are on the ground, knees bent at an angle slightly greater than 90°.

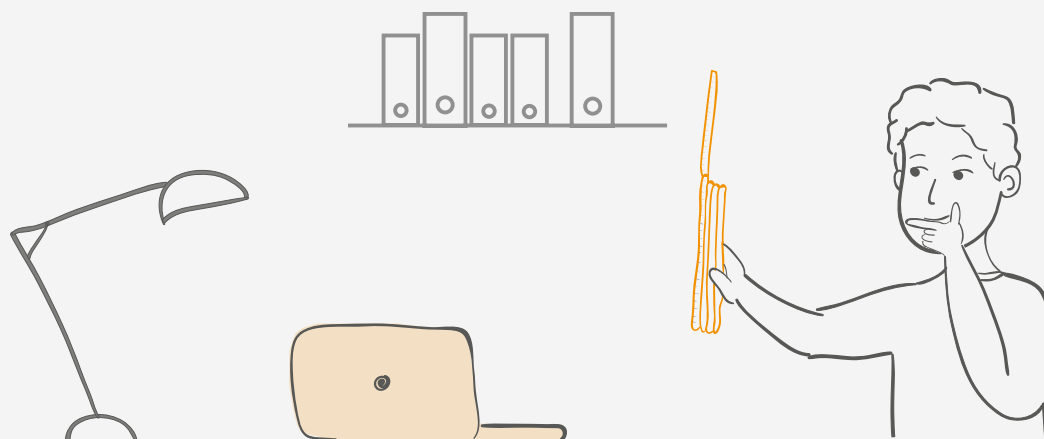
*If feet are not on the ground, a footrest can help.*

Backrest or lumbar support is height-adjustable.

*The curve of the backrest (lumbar support) is to be adjusted to the height of the lumbar spine (forwards curve).*

Armrests are height-adjustable (same height as the desk top) and forearms are resting on them.

*The use of armrests can prevent neck and shoulder tension when working at the desk.*



## Work environment

### Space requirements

There is sufficient space to move around at the workstation.

- » optimal<sup>2</sup> – 160 cm x 100 cm
- » functional<sup>3</sup> – 120 cm x 80 cm
- » minimal<sup>4</sup> – 80 cm x 80 cm

Space to move around is important, as it allows one to change posture at the workstation, move while seated (active sitting) and also alternate between sitting and standing on occasion.

Tripping hazards are removed.

Tripping hazards are a common cause of accidents. Cables are a typical tripping hazard when working from home.

### Lighting

Workstation has sufficient lighting; additional floor or desk lamps are used if necessary.

The lighting levels required for office workstations are hard to verify at home – a little brighter is preferable to too dark. A desk lamp on its own without general room lighting speeds up eye fatigue.

There is a visual connection to the outdoors.

Looking into the distance gives eyes a change to rest and recover from constantly looking at the screen.

Suitable sun protection is installed to prevent reflections and glare.

If the sun reflects off the computer screen or other surfaces, it is unpleasant for the eyes and causes them to fatigue.

Warm white light is used in the evening, at the latest two hours before bed.

Light with a high proportion of blue can impede the production of the “sleep hormone” melatonin. This type of light keeps the body awake and can disrupt sleep. This also applies to the light from screens such as those on computers or mobile devices.

### Room climate

Ideally, the air temperature should be 20–22 °C.

If it is too hot at the workstation, fatigue increases and concentration drops. In hot temperatures in summer, ventilate the workstation early in the morning, use external sun protection, if present, and drink a lot.

Disruptive draughts are avoided.

Cold draughts can contribute to muscle tension including neck pain.

The work room is ventilated regularly.

The more the percentage of CO<sub>2</sub> in the room air rises, the more fatigue will increase and concentration will decrease. Regular ventilation reduces the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration.



## Work organisation

### Separating work from private life

Work and living areas are separate.

*Ideally, separate rooms will be used. In the case of a single room, plants, shelves etc. can form a partition and a visual barrier.*

There is a clear line between work and private life.

*Working times are agreed with house mates and co-habitants. Work documents are cleared away at the end of the working day.*

Company/organisational data is protected when working in a private setting.

*For instance, house mates and co-habitants do not have access to work documents. The computer is locked when left unattended, or files are password-protected.*

Employee data is protected.

*E.g. private telephone number is protected.*

### Work routine

Concentrated, targeted work is possible.

*There are no distractions caused by house mates, co-habitants or household activities.*

Time windows are agreed for being reached by superiors and colleagues.

Screen work is interrupted by alternating work tasks.

*Variety can improve concentration and motivation.*

Active movement or small exercise breaks are encouraged.

*For instance, phone calls can be held standing up or while walking. Exercises to relax the shoulders and neck prevent muscle tension.*

There is sufficient access to company communications and information.

### Working time

It is possible to arrange working times flexibly.

*The beginning and end of the working day and breaks can be arranged flexibly – in compliance with the German Working Hours Act (ArbZG) and in coordination with colleagues and superiors.*

(Short) breaks and statutory rest breaks are observed.

*According to the German Working Hours Act, breaks must total at least 30 minutes for a working time of 6–9 hours and 45 minutes for a working time over 9 hours. Additional short breaks at shorter intervals also help promote concentration. After the end of the working day, an uninterrupted rest period of at least 11 hours is required.*

Work-related availability outside of working times is avoided.

There is a system for documenting working time and overtime and this system is actually used.

### Communication

(Regular) professional and social exchange with superiors and colleagues is possible.

*Different types of media (e.g. phone, video conference) and formats (e.g. team meetings, virtual coffee breaks) can be used.*

Fatigue resulting from frequent and long video calls (Zoom fatigue) is prevented.

*For example, the number and length of video calls is limited, breaks between and during online meetings are observed and structured in a way that allows employees to rest and recover.*

The relationship of trust between manager and employees is promoted through appreciative, fair treatment.

*This type of communication demonstrates a good corporate culture.*

There is plenty of opportunity for feedback and communication in the case of problems or employee requests.

*It is important to reflect on one's own suitability for working from home.*

There is frequent communication regarding duties, workload and successes.

*This prevents overworking and recognises employee performance.*

## Work assignment

Work assignment is suitable for working from home.

*Examples include desk work, screen work and phone calls.*

Scope for decision making and responsibility are clearly defined.

*If possible this should be cleared up both with superiors and with colleagues.*

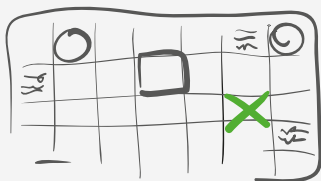
Software is suitable for the work assignment.

Employees have work structuring skills. Support is provided by the employer.

*For instance, seminars or practical aids are offered on the topics of time management, setting objectives and sub-objectives and prioritisation.*

Information and offers on the promotion of individual safety and health competence are provided by the employer.

*Employees with this competence have the ability and motivation to protect, maintain and promote their own health when working from home.*



## Literature and links (predominantly in German)

### Sources

- [1] Fachbereich AKTUELL – Sachgebiet Büro: Arbeiten im Homeoffice – nicht nur in der Zeit der SARS-CoV-2-Epidemie, FBVW-402, as at 04/07/2022, [www.dguv.de/publikationen – Webcode p021569](http://www.dguv.de/publikationen-Webcode-p021569)
- [2] DGUV Information 215-410 – Bildschirm- und Büroarbeitsplätze – Leitfaden für die Gestaltung [https://publikationen.dguv.de/ Webcode p215410](https://publikationen.dguv.de/ Webcode-p215410)

### Further reading and links

- » Heitmann, C.; Fietz, T.; Zieschang, H.: Sicheres und gesundes Arbeiten von zu Hause aus: Informationen und Empfehlungen zu Homeoffice und Vertrauensarbeitszeit. In: DGUV Forum 5/2020. <https://forum.dguv.de/ausgabe/5-2020>
- » Weitere Literatur zur Arbeit im Homeoffice in DGUV Forum, Ausgabe 08/2020, Schwerpunkt „Homeoffice“ <https://forum.dguv.de/ausgabe/8-2020>
- » Fachbereich AKTUELL – Sachgebiet Grundlegende Themen der Organisation: Unterweisung im Homeoffice, FBORG-004, as at 25/06/2021 [https://publikationen.dguv.de/ Webcode p021951](https://publikationen.dguv.de/ Webcode-p021951)
- » VBG-Info – Mobil arbeiten mit Notebook & Co. – Tipps für den Notebook-Kauf und die Arbeit unterwegs <https://bit.ly/3HbH9fP>
- » IAG – Entscheidungshilfe für die Auswahl eines Headsets, as at 04/2021 [https://publikationen.dguv.de/ Webcode p021785](https://publikationen.dguv.de/ Webcode-p021785)
- » VBG-Info – Bewegung im Büro – Fit durch den Arbeitsalltag, <https://bit.ly/3xoWK8j>
- » Video „Gesund arbeiten im Homeoffice“ (VBG) <https://www.certo-portal.de/artikel/video-gesund-arbeiten-im-homeoffice>
- » Materials on a culture of prevention <https://www.dguv.de/de/praevention/visionzero/kulturderpraevention/index.jsp>
- » Praxishilfe Zoom-Fatigue [publikationen.dguv.de/widgets/pdf/download/article/4428](https://publikationen.dguv.de/widgets/pdf/download/article/4428)
- » Check-UP Zoom-Fatigue [publikationen.dguv.de/widgets/pdf/download/article/4429](https://publikationen.dguv.de/widgets/pdf/download/article/4429)

### Footnotes

- 1 Measurements in the checklist are taken from [1] and [2]
- 2 optimal: well-set-up computer workstation, also suitable for full-time telecommuting work [1]
- 3 functional: suitable for several days of work [1]
- 4 minimal: suitable for occasional work from home [1]

**Notes**

A large grid area for taking notes, consisting of many small squares. The grid is approximately 30 columns wide and 40 rows high, covering most of the page area below the header and above the footer.

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