

Healthy Working MOVE

HANDY HINTS AND TIPS FOR USING A LAPTOP COMPUTER

Laptops are the computer of choice for many people who love their portability. If you are using a laptop as your main PC you're not actually using it as it was originally intended. Laptops were designed for short periods of infrequent use and this is evident by them being small in size and not proportioned for comfortable use by a full grown adult. However, this does mean that laptops are often well proportioned for children to use.

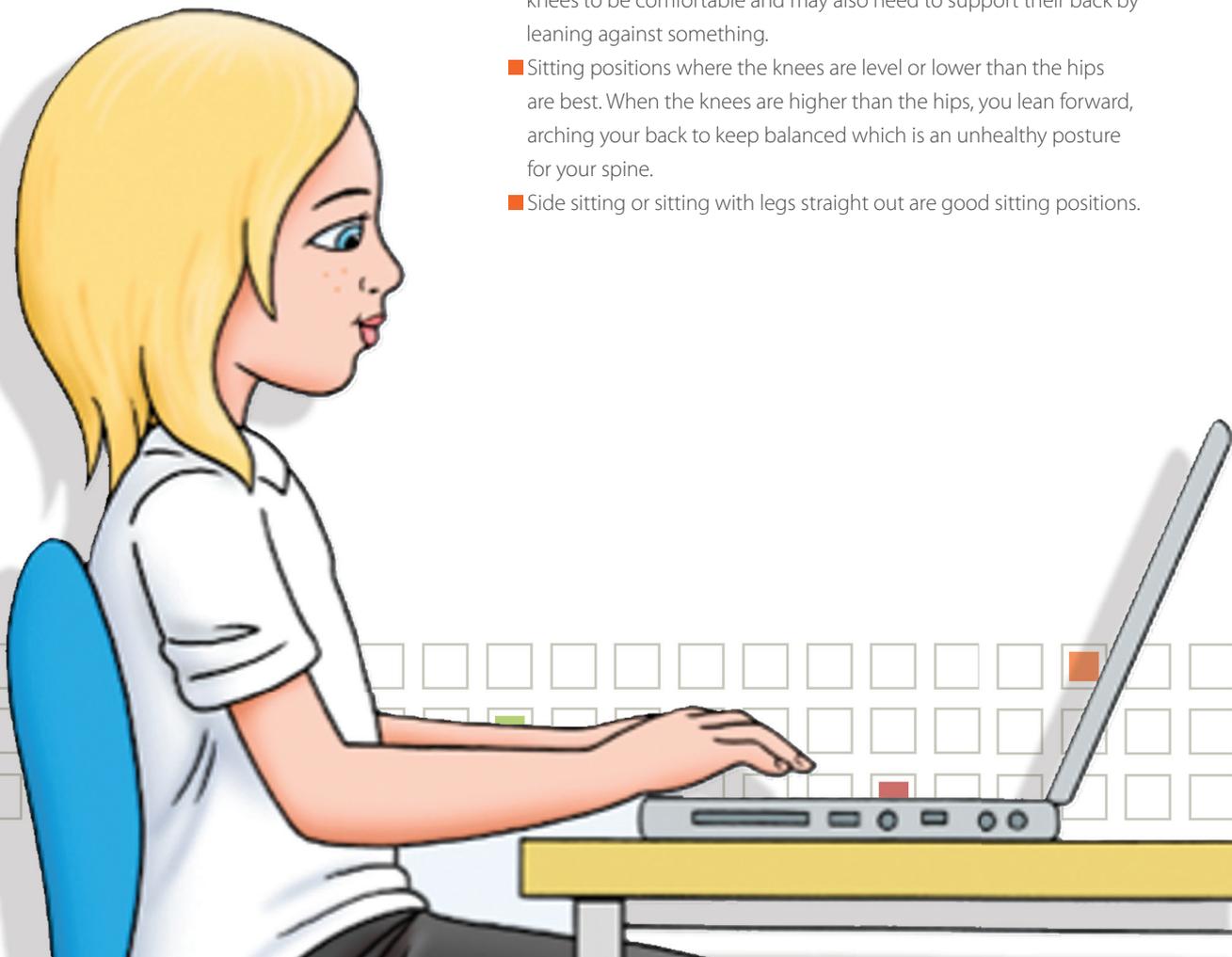
A laptop can be used in lots of different locations so we've put together this tip sheet for parents so that you can help your children use their device safely and comfortably wherever they are. Similarly to using a desktop PC, by far the best location to use a laptop computer is at a desk with an adjustable chair.

At a Desk

- Make sure the desk and adjustable chair are set-up correctly so that your child can sit with their feet flat on the floor, or supported so that their knees are slightly lower than their hips and their elbows.
- Ensure there is enough room under and around the desk for your child to move freely and encourage them to get up and move around regularly.
- As children grow there will come a point that it becomes beneficial to use a laptop with a separate keyboard and mouse. This allows for the laptop to be set further back and raised up so the screen is easier to see without looking down and causing flexion in the neck. For smaller children the laptop screen and built in keyboard are well proportioned for safe use.

Sitting on the floor

- When children are using a laptop sitting on the floor the best position to sit in is with their legs straight out. Sitting with legs straight out also helps stretch the leg muscles, aiding development. While muscles are tighter your child may need support under their knees to be comfortable and may also need to support their back by leaning against something.
- Sitting positions where the knees are level or lower than the hips are best. When the knees are higher than the hips, you lean forward, arching your back to keep balanced which is an unhealthy posture for your spine.
- Side sitting or sitting with legs straight out are good sitting positions.



Sitting on comfy furniture

- Comfy furniture, such as an armchair or sofa, molds to the body and offers little support to maintain a good posture.
- The weight of a laptop can mean that younger children stay in a static position and don't move enough. Using a laptop this way should only be done for a very short time.
- Encourage your child to move around and change positions regularly.

Laying down

- This helps to support their weight when they prop themselves up and prevents them from over arching their lower back.

Carrying a laptop

- Try to minimize the amount of weight your child has to carry. Pack heavier items so that they will be closest to your child's back when the bag is worn.
- Rucksacks should be worn with a tightened but comfortable strap over each shoulder.
- Single strap bags should be worn across the body and your child should regularly alternate which shoulder they carry it on.
- Encourage your child to be security conscious when carrying expensive devices.



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