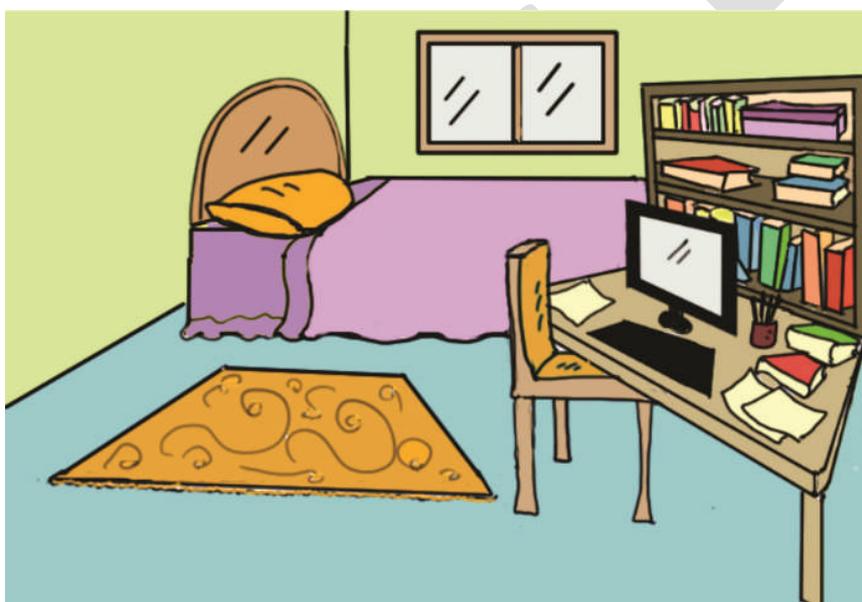




**Enhanced Learning
Educational Services**
"the study skills specialist"

HOME STUDY ENVIRONMENT



It is important to set up the space where you do your work at home to ensure your learning time is as effective as possible. Some things you cannot change, but there may be areas you can improve.

- You should read each point and **highlight the key phrases** in that point.
- Discuss with a friend or parent as you read through the handout.
- You may like to work through this over a number of sessions.



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*First Published 2014 by Enhanced Learning Educational Services
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Enhanced Learning Educational Services Profile

Our Organisation:

Enhanced Learning Educational Services (ELES) is the leading provider of study skills resources in Australia. Since 2001 over 500,000 students across Australia have benefited from our study skills worksheets and workbooks. An Australian business based in Sydney, our clients extend throughout Australia and to international schools overseas. We are committed to helping all students improve their ability to learn and study by providing study skills seminars and resources on the topics students need.

Our Mission:

To provide a worthwhile and effective service to teachers, students and parents, enhancing students' learning skills and abilities through dynamic programs, resources and strategies to unlock the power of the mind and enable greater success at school and in life.

Our Commitment:

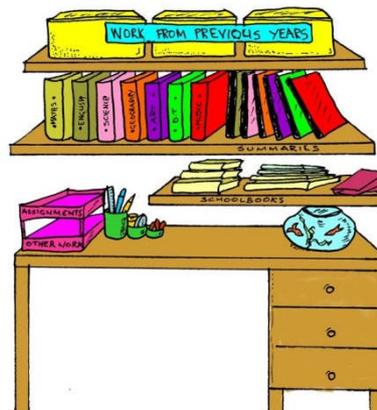
As part of ELES' commitment to education, 5% of all gross income is donated to charities that help and assist children.

For further information about ELES or our products or contact details:

info@enhanced-learning.net
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Aspects of a Good Home Study Environment:

- Quiet and private space.
- Distraction free.
- Ergonomic set up.
- Regular breaks.
- Good lighting.
- Ventilation (fresh air).
- Clear workspace.
- Storage space.
- Noticeboard.



1. QUIET AND PRIVATE SPACE

Achieving this at home can be challenging for some students! Try these suggestions:



QUIET PERIODS: See if the family can agree on a 'quiet' period each night for the whole family.

SIGN ON DOOR: Make a sign that you can put on your door to tell your family that you are working: 'Quiet please'.

WORK OTHER PLACES: Maybe do an hour or so after school in a school library or a public library near your house and do the most difficult work during this time.

Q: Should you study/do work in the same place all the time?

A: It depends on you!

- Some people find that by working in the same place all the time, their mind links that spot with schoolwork which means when they actually sit down to do work they find it much easier to focus, as the brain has associated this spot with doing work for school.
- Some students find it suits them better to work in different places at different times.

DISCUSS

a. How is your workspace in terms of noise levels? Is there anything you could do to make it quieter and more private?

2. DISTRACTION FREE

Food

Q: Is it ok to eat while you are studying? A: Yes as long as-

- You are eating something healthy rather than sugary or fatty food as they can make it more difficult for you to concentrate.
- You take the food with you so you aren't getting up every 2 seconds to get more food.
- You don't overeat (as it will make you feel sleepy and your thinking sluggish).

Music

Q: Is it ok to listen to popular or modern music while you are studying?

- **YES:** if you are doing work that doesn't require much effort or concentration.
- **NO:** if you are doing anything that is difficult, requires effort, requires you to think, understand or remember information. 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.



BAROQUE: The only music that helps your ability to concentrate or focus is baroque music (a type of classical music) playing softly in the background.

Television

Q: Can I do schoolwork in front of the TV?

- **MAYBE:** Technically, yes if you are doing work that doesn't require much effort or concentration like a title page (unless of course if it is a family rule that you can't watch TV while doing work, and the reasons why some families might make this rule is in the next point).
- **PROBABLY NOT:** BUT, it is very easy to get distracted when something interesting comes on the screen. So while it won't actually affect the work you are doing if it is easy work, it will mean that it may take you heaps longer to complete the work. It is not a good idea to get in the habit of doing work while the TV is on. You are better off having distinct times for schoolwork and distinct times for your personal activities.
- **NO WAY:** Definitely no TV if you are doing anything that is difficult, requires effort, requires you to think, understand or remember information. If you try and study for a test while the TV is on, you may not think it is having an effect on you but it is actually going to take you much longer to remember the information.

Social Networking

Q: Can I have things like Facebook or Twitter or MSN open while I am working?

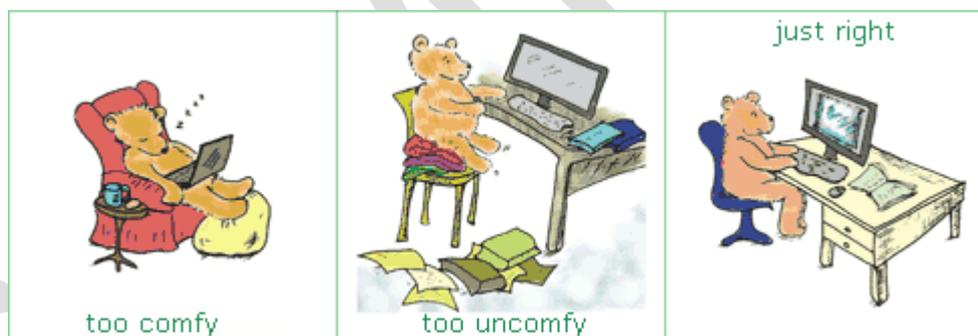
- **GENERALLY NO:** Afraid not, research has shown that when you have something like this open on your computer if a message pops up most people can't resist stopping their work to check it and respond. Suddenly before you know it you have not only lost the thread of what you were working on, but a huge amount of time has passed - more than you realise! Most students say it takes them much longer to complete homework.
- **BUT:** We are not saying no Facebook or Chat or Twitter or Instagram or email for the whole night, but like the TV, have clear periods of time that are allocated to schoolwork and are distraction free, and separate periods of time where you can do whatever you like.

DISCUSS

b. What are the major distractions you have in your study space? How well do you manage these distractions? What else could you try?

3. ERGONOMIC SET UP

A Good Chair



- **TOO COMFORTABLE:** get drowsy and fall asleep.
- **TOO UNCOMFORTABLE:** can't concentrate.
- **JUST RIGHT:** an adjustable chair (adjustable in height from the floor, position of the backrest and angle of the seat) that meets the conditions in the next section.
- **POSTURE:** When you find yourself slouching in your chair, get up, stretch and walk around and sit back down making a conscious effort to maintain an upright, relaxed posture.

DISCUSS

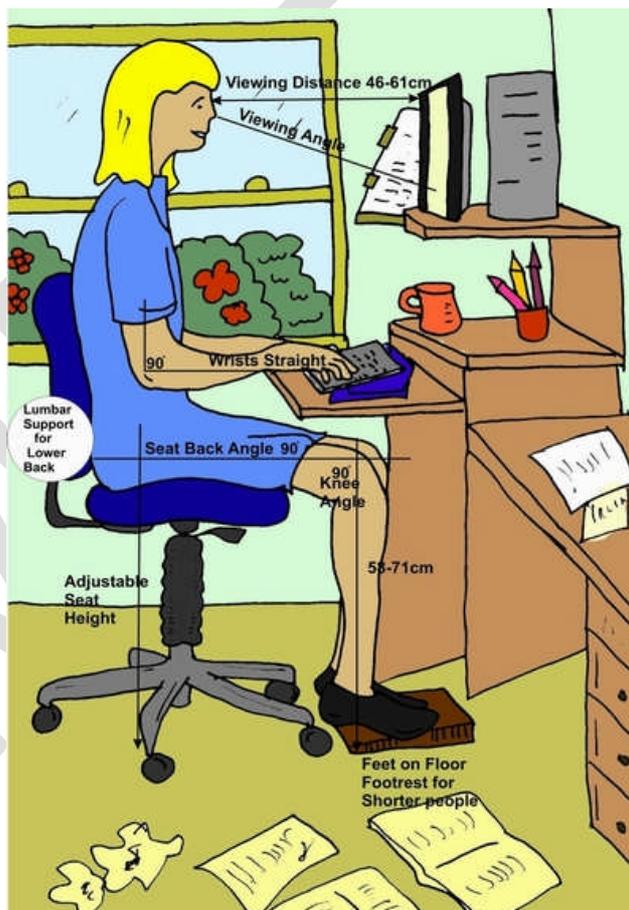
c. What is the chair like in your study space? How is your posture when you are working? Do you take notice of what it is like and try and improve it?

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.

Try this **CHECKLIST**:

- Can you adjust the height of your chair from the ground? **YES NO**
- Do your feet sit flat on the floor (or on a footrest) when you are sitting in your chair? **YES NO**
- Can you adjust the back support on your chair? **YES NO**
- Does the back rest sit comfortably in the small of your back (called lumbar support)? **YES NO**
- Is your seat back angle at 90-120 degrees? **YES NO**
- Do your forearms sit comfortably on the desk? **YES NO**
- Does your chair have adjustable armrests? **YES NO**
- Is the top of your monitor around 5cm above eye level? **YES NO**
- Do you make sure there is no glare on the screen? **YES NO**
- Do you sit at arm's length from the monitor? **YES NO**
- When typing from papers, do you have a document holder in line with the screen? **YES NO**
- Are your arms and elbows relaxed (ie not tensed up) and held close to your body? **YES NO**
- Are the monitor and keyboard centered in front of you (ie not off to the side)? **YES NO**
- Is your keyboard stable (ie not tipping or moving when you type)? **YES NO**
- Is your keyboard angled so your wrists are flat and straight? **YES NO**
- Do you take frequent short micro-breaks? **YES NO**
- Are your knees making a 90 degree angle and are perpendicular to the floor? **YES NO**



DISCUSS

d. How well do you go on the ergonomic checklist? What could you do to improve the space where you work?