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>> Hello, everyone, and welcome to the Job Accommodation Network's Monthly Webcast Series. Today's webcast is called "Ergonomics for Teleworkers". I'm Lisa Mathess and I'm joined by the rest of the Motor Team which includes Matthew McCord and Tatum Storey.

Before we start today's program, I need to go over a few housekeeping items.

First, if any of you experience technical difficulties during the webcast, please use the pod located at the bottom of your screen to send a chat message or send an email to question@askjan.org.

Second you, may submit questions during this presentation using the question and answer chat pod located at the bottom of your screen. To use the pod, just type in your question and then submit to the question queue. You can also send questions at any time during the webcast to our email account at question@askJAN.org. Time permitting, questions received via the chat pod will be answered at the end of the presentation.

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And finally, at the end of the webcast, an evaluation form will automatically pop up on your screen in another window. We really appreciate your feedback. So please stay logged onto fill out the evaluation form.

And now, let me introduce Tatum Storey.

>> TATUM STOREY: Hello, we'll go ahead and move on with the slides.

We would like to start by going over some of the objectives or expectations for this presentation on ergonomic equipment for telework or working from home. Throughout our presentation we will go through some of the ergonomic basics including what the term ergonomic truly means and how ergonomics play a role in the health and well-being of employees with and without disabilities.

Then we will discuss ergonomic evaluations and what one might expect with that process.

Oftentimes there are professionals who can perform these assessments but the information is also laid out in a way that a layperson can do the assessments and adjust as needed.

Then we intend to talk about some of the common problems for those issues and discuss remedies, solutions and products that may assist in solving some of these matters. And then finally, we will get into tips and resources for home setups. Right now, many entities across the nation are enforcing telework so JAN as well as other organizations have been putting together practical tips for setting up home offices.

We'll reserve time at the end of the presentation for questions and answers.

Next slide, please.

Okay. So we would like to start by discussing -- jumping right in we'll go over the definition of ergonomics. The Miriam Webster dictionary defines ergonomics as an applied science concerned with designing and arranging things for people so that people and things interact most efficiently and safely. According to the Human Factors And Ergonomics Society. Human factors is concerned with the application of what we know about people, their abilities, characteristics and limitations to the design of equipment they use environments in which they function and jobs which they perform both of these definitions seem extensive we at JAN like to refer to ergonomics as the science of fitting jobs to people. Next slide, please.

Now here are some statistics that support the prevalence of workplace injuries and just how big the impact of sitting can have on our bodies. Musculoskeletal disorders or MSDs are injuries or disorders of the muscles, nerves, tendons, joints, ligaments and bones. MSDs account for 33% of all workplace injury and illness cases in fact a study came out last year that says 1 in 2 adults are living with MSD. A 2015 study showed prolonged sitting increases risk for various serious health conditions such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, even for those who exercise regularly.

We included this slide in our presentation really just to showcase that the way we work can and does have an effect on those with and without disabilities it's not unique and specific to an industry in particular or the jobs we do but sitting in itself has been shown to be problematic. Next slide, please.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration or OSHA has indicated that even when workstations are set up correctly and ergonomic principles are implemented. Users can still be at risk for developing musculoskeletal disorders in addition to information about computer workstation environments and economic checklists OSHA offers a list of signs and symptoms to look for that could indicate an employee is at risk for a musculoskeletal disorder associated with computer use.

They include numbness or a burning sensation in the hand. Reduced grip strength in the hand. Swelling or stiffness in the joints. Pain in wrists, forearms, elbows, neck or back reduced range of motion in shoulders neck or back. Dry, itchy or sore eyes. Blurred or double vision. Aching or tingling, cramps, weakness. If an employee is experiencing these signs or symptoms, it does not automatically mean they will develop a musculoskeletal disorder however it may be a good indication that a user could benefit from an ergonomic assessment or evaluation and the workstation may need to be modified. Next slide, please.

There are many reasons employers should consider implementing ergonomic practices and principles into their workplace whether as an ADA reasonable accommodation standpoint, as a general practice for all employees in the workplace and as also we're seeing now as a response to the current public health crisis as many of us continue to telework for the foreseeable future some benefits of a Universal Design or ergonomic considerations are to reduce Workers' Compensation claims to reduce leave time due to injuries and illnesses to create a safe and inclusive work space. To satisfy their accommodation obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

There are a -- next slide, please.

There are a variety of medical conditions ergonomic assessments can benefit. This by no means is an exhaustive list but these are some of the impairments that we see frequently at JAN that may benefit from an ergonomic evaluation. Back injuries. A variety of cumulative trauma injuries such as bursitis, carpal tunnel, ten December elbow, tendonitis, trigger finger, thoracic outlet syndrome according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2016 musculoskeletal disorders involving the back involved 30% of all musculoskeletal disorders.

Next slide, please.

Moving right along to universal designs in regard to most likely an office setting or office setting at home, a universal design is the design of buildings, products or environments to make them accessible and usable to all people regardless of age, disability or other factors there are some things we want to be mindful of when trying to be as accessible as possible to as many users as possible.

First consider providing telework as a general benefit of employment don't make it an accommodation if it's doable from home. Many thrive in the home space and that is something we've seen throughout the past few months.

Next, provide ergonomic adjustable chairs and desks this can allow an employee to move positions and alternate between sitting and standing as needed throughout the workday humans aren't meant to sit for eight plus hours a day staring a computer screen giving people flexibility may better their health and in turn their productivity and quality of work. You will see when we get into the tips of teleworking ergonomics a big theme is going to be to utilize a full sized computer monitor even when working from a laptop stand-alone monitors are going to be more adjustable and can be deemed more appropriate for an array of users so just consider getting into the practice of furnishing separate monitors for those teleworkers as there are many benefits to this simple change. Also ensuring that computers are pro loaded with assistive technology software. This can range from a Speech Recognition Software option to screen readers and magnification just an array of programs often used by those with disabilities it's important to make sure that individuals with these programs on their in-office computers have them at home as well so they can work efficiently and effectively. Lastly looking at having a selection of alternative mice and keyboards. There are many options of alternative mice and keyboards like manager keyboards, trackballs, split keyboards, split button keyboards even foot controls as well as many other products to consider. We are all different and have different preferences and needs so it is important to be mindful of what people may request. For detailed information on developing and implementing a universal design, check out JAN's publication: Universal design and our JAN article titled:

Accessible computer workstations, a snapshot. Now Lisa will take over and speak about ergonomic assessments.

>> LISA MATHESS: So getting into best practices when assessing an ideal workstation, a focal point in ergonomic assessments is the position of the computer monitor in relation to the user.

To reduce eyestrain and fatigue, the monitor should be about 18 to 28 inches away from the user. The top of the monitor should be at or slightly below eye level and the angle should be between 0 and 7 degrees.

Proper placement of the monitor limits the need for the user to tilt his or her head back to see the screen and limits the need for the user to lean forward to see what's on the screen. If the monitor is correctly positioned and the user has difficulty seeing images on the screen, additional accommodations such as screen magnification may need to be considered. We also want to be mindful of task lighting and those overhead lights we may be using in our homes. So encourage proper body posture, reduce the need to turn the head from side to side. And reduce or limit strain on the head, neck and shoulders input documents should be properly positioned and frequently used items should be within easy reach. The head and neck should be aligned when using the phone and when looking at the monitor with the user's body properly aligned in front of the computer.

Lastly I want to mention that breaks are so important. They can benefit muscles in the upper extremities but also your eyes need breaks every so often. Are rest breaks built into the workday? To reduce stress on eye muscles, an individual should look away from the workstation and refocus on an object at least 25 feet away and blink often. Rest breaks should also include simple brief exercises such as shoulder shrugs, neck rolls, ankle rotations, leg extensions, overhead stretches, handshake and finger spreads.

Setup when arms, elbows or wrists and hands are not supported this can result in pain in the extremities and can result in improper posture in performing an ergonomic assessment one would want to consider if the employee's shoulders are relaxed and elbows appropriately angled meaning not bent upward or stretched forward and if wrists are appropriately angled while keyboarding mousing and using equipment and tools and whether or not the mouse or tool fits the user's hand. Wrists shouldn't be resting while typing. Wrists should be in a neutral position not flexed up or down so many times this means our keyboards shouldn't be prepped up on the keyboard legs that comes with it. Sharp or hard edges can irritate nerves and cause discomfort or pain so it's good to check any area where elbows or arms aren't being properly supported and we may need to cushion edges of our workstations.

Arms or hands may become fatigued from overuse so it can be important to consider how long an employee is performing a repetitive task and when might breaks be taken.

A very common ergonomic concern is whether or not the employee's back, legs and feet are properly supported. Being that our chair is where we spend a great deal of time, assessments place a lot of focus on evaluating an employee's posture and position when seated. An employee's chair should be supporting the back to provide lumbar support and maintain the natural curvature of the spine.

Feet should rest firmly on the floor and hips and knees should be resting comfortably, as well. Seat pans should be comfortable and the correct size so that movement isn't restricted but also not creating pressure from the chair on the back of your knees. There should also be room between top of legs and the underside of the desk so the employee isn't confined. The employee or user should be able to move the chair around freely and shouldn't have to push off the desk or floor to move around the area.

Proper positioning of materials, equipment, tools and the like may reduce or eliminate the need for an employee to move in an awkward way or repeatedly perform the same motion that causes strain on the head, neck, shoulders or back.

In some cases, tools can be provided to help perform a task and Matt will provide some examples of this later on, ergonomic assessments or job analysis can help to identify repetitive tasks and tasks that require exertion which can be then evaluated or modified to ensure that employees perform these tasks in a way that reduces their risk of fatigue or injury.

Assessments should also consider individual needs such as personal use items or assistive technology that employees may be using. Right now with the unique situation, many of us working from home, we need to be that much more mindful of the AT people need to be successful.

Assistive technology and other equipment needed as an accommodation to effectively work at home, such as the screen magnification, screen reading software, speech recognition, larger monitor or videophone, sit to stand desk, ergonomic chair, things such as those items need to be considered and we want to assess those technologies that are unique to an individual and ensure they, too, are fitted to the person.

Environmental concerns including noise levels, air quality, and temperature variations can also be addressed in these ergonomic assessments.

Luckily when we're assessing these variables for those of us who are teleworking we often are in control of our own environments in our homes but as many of you have noticed it can still get loud between outside noises or those pets and kids are creating those noisy loud environments which could be distracting. If employees rotating through different job tasks throughout the day, it may be necessary to evaluate each work setup or analyze each job task individually.

Now to take a visual look at assessing a good computer workstation I wanted to share a diagram of the workstation in the proper ergonomic setup as the diagram depicts an ergonomic workstation is one where the monitor is at eye level or slightly below the monitor is about an arm's length away there's minimal bend at the wrist back is straight, elbows close to the body back rest supporting the lower back and chair is adjustable and users feet are flat on the ground or resting with a foot rest with room between the front of the seat pan and back of the knees. This is just one of the many diagrams available that offer an easy guide on how employees can have an ergonomically correct workstation even while working with what we have here in our home offices.

These type of diagrams can be a helpful tool for employees and can serve as a nice reminder for proper posture when working on a computer.

>> TATUM STOREY: So jumping back in, let's go over some of the practices that are easy to fall into but that should be avoided as they can cause some issues.

First, we have working in bed or as we like to call it master bedroom with a view, and neck strain. Although it is tempting to simply grab your lab top and stay in bed while you work, this can cause that awkward bending of the neck and issues with the eye-to-monitor distance. Typing can also be very awkward for the wrist and forearms as well as it just being bad practice. It is also always practical to get yourself in the work zone in a work-specific setting. Specifically setting your work area from your rest area is always best practice for many reasons.

Moving into the living room. It is also good to avoid the couch as your workstation for the same principles and reasons. I know how easy it is to convince yourself that working on the couch to send one quick email is okay. But as we all know and can contest, that one email usually turns into multiple emails and before you know it an hour and a half has passed the bentover elbows underneath our body weight isn't good for the tendons in our arms nor is the twisted spine always remind yourself it's not worth the pain it will put your body through.

This is something we have all probably seen or experienced, especially over the past few months. Multi-tasking or working with a toddler on your lap while trying to type one handed the awkwardness is not ideal not to mention the distractions this can cause that take away from the efforts that should be going into providing meaningful work I know with kids it can be hard and there isn't much you can do. But try your best to be mindful and adjust the best you can.

Another big no-no is sitting on the floor, typing with one hand, and holding papers with the other. This can go hand in hand with the previous slide on working with children. You know getting on the floor so that your kids think you're playing with them all while trying to multi-task and get work done. We see in this photo how this can't be ergonomically correct the individual's knees are to their chest and they are hunched over their coffee table.

JAN offers information on ergonomics in the workplace including publications and Resource Guides on this slide we have a screenshot of the JAN Accommodation and Compliance Series on ergonomics in the workplace a Resource Guide which can be used to supplement the information presented in this webcast. Linked within the ergonomic publication we also have additional JAN resources including assessment providers, which list both virtual and onsite options, we have seen at JAN that many are interested in the virtual assessments right now. You can also find ergonomic software training and assessment tools on how to conduct an ergonomic evaluation within this resource. Ergonomic equipment is another section we include in this resource which includes an array of equipment from workstations and chairs to ergonomic staplers and wrist rests although JAN does not recommend or endorse any one specific product over the next, we offer information on equipment and products we know exist for your viewing and consideration.

For detailed questions related to a product or service you may find it useful to contact the manufacturer or vendor or to check in with a healthcare provider to see if they have any recommendations based on an individual's needs.

JAN's webpage also offers a variety of information related to various topics, impairments, limitations, needs and strategies. This is a screenshot of the homepage with the A to Z link circled at the top. Towards the bottom of the page you will see a drop-down menu where you can select disability, limitation or work-related function, depending on what information you know or are trying to accommodate. We encourage exploring our site as it offers a lot of practical information related to accommodating individuals with all sorts of impairments.

Now Matt will take over and discuss some common ergonomic problems and remedies.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Thanks, Tatum. Okay. Now let's take a look at some of the more common problems we face when we're at home and some possible remedies for them.

We'll start with probably the most common problem, sitting.

This isn't really an issue that's unique to people with disabilities. We all can have trouble with prolonged sitting from time to time. But employees with disabilities such as back conditions may have a harder time with it than those without such conditions.

Regardless, making sure that our backs and arms are supported, our feet are flat on the floor and our posture is properly maintained by our workstation setup can help to alleviate pain and discomfort caused by sitting.

There's a wide variety of products that may be helpful for employees with medical conditions that make sitting difficult. Some more common options are lumbar support cushion which you may be using right -- cushion which you may be using right now in the form of a decorative pillow from your couch. Ergonomic chairs this may be as simple as getting a chair from your office and taking it home but if not something even as a sturdy dining room chair but you may use cushions or folded blankets to raise you up to proper height levels to the table.

Adjustable height workstations and in this case, I was use old video game strategy guides to prop up my monitor to get it to where it was eye level with the screen a while ago and of course foot rests which can almost be anything you can find lying around the house, boxes, reams of paper, wood slabs from your garage you might have tucked away all can be considered a potential foot rest.

Onto Slide 24 we wanted to provide some links to resources where you could find some information on this issue. First our consultants corner article titled: Best practices for addressing requests for ergonomic chairs and second is our Solution Showcase videos on adjustable workstations and ergonomic chairs. Links to both of these are found on this slide.

For our next common problem using a notebook computer or laptop, first and foremost connecting and using a full-size monitor can be incredibly helpful as we already discussed laptop screens can only be adjusted so much by their design. But with a normal monitor you can adjust the height to be eye level. This makes it so you no longer need to bend your neck to look at the screen. And with the monitor's larger size there's often less eyestrain, too.

Along some of the same lines the use of external keyboard and mouse can also be very helpful. Wrist strain from awkward typing angles are just as much of a problem at home as it is in the office. And just like with the screen, laptop keyboards can't be adjusted all that much. Working on a laptop alone is not ideal for a variety of reasons.

Also, remember to properly support your forearms and palms. The arms of your chair can go a long way, if you have them. But something like a rolled up kitchen towel can provide some much-needed cushioning. And if you're having to work some days in the office and some days at home, you'll find yourself having to transport that laptop back and forth. Consider using some wheeled luggage to eliminate needing to carry that extra weight back and forth.

As for some other products that may help with the use of a laptop computer, docking stations can be very useful as they enable laptop users to convert it into something more akin to a desktop computer. The doc station -- the docking station allows you to plug in USB ports and serve as a hub for a full size monitor, keyboard and mouse some also have an Ethernet cable port so you don't have to rely on WiFi as well with this your laptop itself will basically serve as a desktop computer tower there are stand-alone forearm supports which you can buy from Amazon if you don't want to buy out of the box solutions you can get creative as you can see on the bottom right image on the slide a do it yourself setup with a woman sitting at a desk with laptop strapped to a cardboard box anything that gets us close to an ergonomic setup gets us close to the right direction.

Prolonged keyboarding and mousing can be difficult. But for individuals with cumulative trauma disorders such as carpal tunnel syndrome it can be even worse most employees who work in office settings spend a large portion of their day typing on a computer nowadays implementing ergonomic principles and making minor workstation adjustments can be a good first step to consider when an employee reports difficulty with typing and mousing altering and adjusting the placement of the mouse is one remedy keyboards and mouses come in all shapes and sizes in some cases it might be the keyboard or mouse you're using might be just a little bit too big or small. Another simple remedy could be to adjust the armrest on the chair remember the elbows should be close to the body and the armrest is there to support the arms in the proper position.

As for some product based solutions for issues with keyboarding or mousing the logical first place to start would be looking at alternative keyboards and mice. Beyond that though an articulating keyboard might be helpful to adjust the angle of the keyboard or its height. Wrist rests will also be helpful as they help to support the wrist and palms a do it yourself options may be a rolled up tea cloth or hand towel to elevate the palms into a more neutral position.

Most employees in office settings need to use a phone as part of their job. Though as much of it is used will vary from situation to situation. It can be tempting to get into the habit of resting the phone on your shoulder or tilting your read while talking and typing but doing so can cause unnecessary strain. Maintaining ergonomic posture while speaking on the phone can reduce discomfort and alleviate pain associated with various conditions. This can be as easy as relaxing the shoulders and keeping the head upright. It also helps to move the phone to an area on the desk that's easy to reach so that way you're not having to stretch repeatedly when you need to make a call. Also taking microbreaks while standing and talking on the phone can be very helpful products like a hands free headset or gooseneck phone holder can be used so there isn't as much need to reach for the phone or support the receiver while talking putting calls on speakerphone too can be appropriate if the situation allows. And it might be another solution to reduce pain and discomfort experienced while holding the phone receiver.

>> LISA MATHESS: Thank you, Matt, now looking at another issue we may face, having to read documents. So when considering document holders, there are a couple of different considerations.

You could use an inline document holder that sits between the keyboard or the keyboard tray and the screen. And it's aligned with your body midline so all you have to do is lower your eyes to look down to see the documents, raise your eyes to see the screen. Otherwise, you can use a screen mounted document holder and position this to the same side of your screen as your dominant eye. Use a free-standing document holder and position this next to the side of the screen and slightly anger it so it follows a curve from the side of the screen. And you don't have to go buy a document holder off the shelf. Many of us have cookbook holders on display in the kitchen so steal that for the time being. Let's not forget that we don't have to be tied to the chair to do some of the reading let us get up and stretch and move it to the couch while we review some of these documents. Little things like that can make a big difference.

Eyestrain can result from looking at a computer monitor for prolonged periods of time. For some individuals, eyestrain can also contribute to the onset of migraine headaches. When employees report that looking at the computer is difficult, a simple remedy or fix could be to reposition the monitor if it's too close or too far from the user. Clean the monitor of dust -- if dust and dirt are preventing the user from clearly seeing information or reduce glare by adjusting lighting. Products such as a monitor riser or arm, a DIY option here will be a stack of books or box to get that monitor up higher. Adjust your lighting. Take a look at where the light source is coming from whether it be the windows your main ceiling light or lamps and adjust the lights and window shades as needed and continue to adjust as the natural sunshine rotates throughout the day.

And an anti-glare filter might also be necessary to provide so the user doesn't have to strain to see the computer screen when light becomes too harsh and creates that bounceback or glare.

If a teak can be a result performing the same task repeatedly over the course of a shift or by not taking micro breaks to adjust seating position to alternate between sitting and standing or to stretch. Preventing fatigue by remembering to take time throughout the day for these easy remedies can help to prevent computer-related injuries or an exacerbation of an existing condition. Equipment including adjustable height workstations. This might look like working on a stack at something like a kitchen counter to stand at and rotating between that setup and the sitdown workstation you have created at the dining room table.

You can also purchase desktop adjustable workstations these are just a smaller adjustable unit that has the mechanisms to move up and down. But it sits on an existing desk or table.

The treadmill or bike workstations could be used to combat fatigue Amazon and Walmart have pedal exercisers you can ship to your house to keep the blood flow while seated users can also set alarms or reoccurring daily reminders to stretch periodically.

Okay. So switching gears to look at some of the telework considerations more -- job restructuring removing those secondary duties as an accommodate or changing the way we're performing those essential primary fundamental duties. This may look like a modified schedule so the employee is working on the hardest tasks when they have the most mental energy or ability to perform. Let's consider some flexibility here.

We know that kids are now home with us while we're trying to work. So perhaps extending hours into the evening so work can be done once the kids are pretty much out of our hair. We've mentioned the distractions kids and other things can cause. So we might want to consider noise-canceling headsets or look at apps for concentration issues.

Turning the usual phone call into an instant message or an email so there's less background noise to fight with.

And being mindful with your own schedule and really mapping out your day with time chunks and want you want to accomplish during those times. And then of course taking a break. We have emphasized this I know. But I think we just easily forget about breaks when we're trying to be super productive but ultimately breaks can boost productivity.

In similar premise is job restructuring workplace flexibility. I mentioned allowing people to work when they are more energized or around their other duties it's just the norm now that many of us are trying to maintain a full-time job while having to watch our kids as well because schools are now often virtual based so perhaps alternating an employee's schedule, letting them adjust as needed to not only get the job done but allowing them to help the kids with their own school demands, as well.

Continuing with flexibility, allowing people to move around to take those stretch breaks, use the restroom, perhaps check in with our colleagues and then of course permitting use of time with check-ins with our service providers that may look like a therapist or counselor for someone or it may be someone's immunologist looking for a chronic health condition.

So with the flexibility you may consider allowing any missed time to be made up or allowing people to use accrued leave or unpaid leave when job duties can't be performed lastly I want to highlight a new ENews article titled: Make Telework. It has fixes for challenges that we all can look across.

Okay. Let's switch back to the topic of equipment while teleworking. Tatum highlighted the JAN ergonomics publication earlier with a screenshot on Slide 20 let's not forget we have these ergonomic considerations in this publication and really go through it and self-assess what you're working with or how you're working. Lots of companies and organizations are pushing out tips and resources to help us better use what we have with our space and equipment. Some of these links are from the Mayo Clinic, Yale, system concepts. So if you download the slide deck, you'll be able to access the hyperlinks to all of these great resources.

Now focusing on equipment and accommodation issues while teleworking. The issue of what an employer must provide to individuals who telework during ordinary times is one that's complex and it's not addressed by the ADA or EEOC guidance so during this COVID-19 pandemic individuals are either requesting to work at home as an accommodation or they are being mandated to work at home along with the rest of the workplace.

In either situation, employees typically need the appropriate equipment to do their work. Like a laptop or cell phone. So does this mean that an employer might need to provide workstation equipment like an ergo chair or a sit-to-stand desk? According to the EEOC guidance, the pandemic preparedness guidance, it says, during a pandemic, if an individual with a disability needs the same accommodation at a telework site that was provided at the workplace, the employer should do that accommodation. Absent undue hardship.

The example is included about an accountant with low vision who uses screen reading software on their office computer as an accommodation. And who was now provided a notebook computer that has a screenreader installed to work at home during the pandemic.

But what about those who are now working from home who didn't have a accommodations in the office but now are having some problems? Working at home without this equipment can trigger a request for reasonable accommodation when a disability-related need for this equipment becomes apparent. So when a request is received from an employee who is not -- who was not previously accommodated in the workplace but who is now working at home during the pandemic, an ADA-covered employer should initiate in the Interactive Process and gather disability-related information to establish whether they have the right to receive that accommodation under the ADA.

A request for accommodation in this situation is handled the same as it is when an individual requests a change in the workplace for a disability-related reason.

So all that to say, engage in the Interactive Process, regardless what people had, and see what you can provide to enable them to be their best version of an employee.

So I just went over we as employers may have to provide equipment as an accommodation for those who are teleworking for whatever reason. But do we as employers have to physically come in and set it up? Or would we be okay shipping a product to you and letting you have at it? At JAN we're getting lots of accommodation questions on equipment when it comes to basically this forced telework due to state orders so is the employer responsible to deliver and set up those homework stations? It's not addressed by the EEOC. But we at JAN would say it's better business practice to have an employer representative to set up the equipment to make sure that the employee is set up for success. I think that's what's going to be ideal.

I provided the link to the Federal resource telework.gov. This is the main hub of teleworking information specific to Federal workers. But they also have these two tools that I thought are useful. The self-assessment. And the safety checklist.

Employees are encouraged to consider the following factors and making an honest determination about their telework capabilities on the self-assessment you can record any concerns you may have and how you will address them in order to telework. This assessment will walk you through general considerations, self-management, technology, communication and appropriate space.

Then the safety checklist, this is designed to assess the overall safety of an alternative work site.

So let's look at some additional resources.

We wanted to include some helpful resources for doing some in-house ergonomic assessments. This eTool from OSHA illustrates simple, inexpensive principles that will help you create a safe and comfortable computer workstation. There's no single correct posture or arrangement of components that will fit everyone. However, there are basic design goals, some of which was shown on Slide 12 to consider when setting up a computer workstation or performing computer-related tasks.

The Department of Defense and the Computer/Electronic Accommodation Program offers this guide which provides illustrations of proper workstation ergonomics. They also provide a checklist for implementation of these strategies as well as tips for prevention of repetitive stress injuries. As we have gone over, ensuring proper ergonomics is the -- in the workplace is a smart business decision because it increases employee productivity and satisfaction, while also reducing possible injuries or reinjuries.

In addition to the previous resources, we also have some ergonomic tips to share. Colorado State University pushed out some ideal tips. We have gone over many of these things. But you want to use a good chair if possible. If you don't have a good chair, figure out what features you're missing and try filling in those gaps by, say, adding some pillows for back or leg support. You want to raise your chair. Most kitchen tables and desks are too high. So use a seat cushion or a pillow and folded blankets, if needed.

Support your feet, whether that be on a phonebook, a stepstool if they don't freely touch the ground while sitting.

And raise that monitor. Using books, old shoe boxes, et cetera. Any bulk item you bought that you don't use too much. And then lastly use external equipment it's essential that the monitor is separated from the keyboard and mouse. The top of the monitor should be at or slightly below eye level and shoulders relaxed with elbows around 90 degrees. HumanTech also had some helpful tips to improve home office ergonomics one feature that's very helpful is the templates they have hyperlinked for do it yourself laptop stands and they have even more resources which we have linked on the slide.

The National Institute of Health offers a tool with accompanied pictures and explanations of various exercises for each category learning disability on the slide. Each category has between two and eight different movements or stretches to do. So it's very comprehensive. I was happy to see that I already did some of these to help reduce my own strains.

So with all this talk of equipment adjustments and being mindful of positioning and postures, what would be the No. 1 takeaway from all of this? Really getting up and moving is probably what we need the most. Our bodies are simply not designed to stay in static positions for long periods of time and that includes sitting at a computer.

This doesn't mean that you have to stop working, though. Take that phone call while standing, walking around your office space. Do neck stretches while you are typing up that report. Give yourself a wrist massage while you're on that Zoom call. It can also be helpful to set reminders on your computer or phone to remind you to stand up and move. Old habits are hard to break, afterall. And practice the 20-20-20. For every 20 minutes of computer use, take 20 seconds and look at something 20 feet away.

We also wanted to plug the JAN Coronavirus disease 2019 page. It has lots of uses on it from handling accommodation requests to reduced exposure to COVID, which medical conditions may be at higher risk of COVID and more. We also have a blog article in it on mental health considerations in light of everything COVID, as well. This is a pandemic. And such situations cause more problems than just the disease itself afterall.

Here are a few links to help resources regarding COVID-19 that are now housed on the JAN site, as well.

EEOC has pushed out some really helpful EEOC guidances.

And before we begin our Q&A segment of the presentation, we wanted to just remind you that we're still available to answer your questions. We are teleworking due to the pandemic, though. So chat and email is the best way to reach us. However, if you prefer to call, we can get back to you if you leave us a voice message that way, as well.

And now let's take a look at some of the questions we have from our audience. As a reminder, to use the question pod just put your cursor on the line next to the word question. Type your question. And then click on the arrow to submit to the question queue. Okay someone asked my mouse hand is considerably colder uncomfortably so than my non-house hand. Do you have any information on this experience? Matt, do you want to -- is your mic working enough to answer that? I know we have a lot of great products on the solution page.

>> MATTHEW McCORD: Well, this is what I sound like so -- but one option that might be helpful would be our vendor listing for heated ergonomic keyboard products. Specifically we have some wrist supports on there that might be helpful to use. It can help to just give some generalized heat to the hand area in general. Both for the keyboard and for the mouse. So that would be what I would suggest for that.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yes. If you go to the ask JAN website under temperature sensitivity we have a bunch of computer products hyperlinked. And that heated wrist pad is useful. And there are some USB heated products as well is there. So that can be good for any type of numbness and temperature sensitivities in that non-dominant hand.

Looking at the more questions, during the eight-hour workday how often should we take breaks to stand and for how long?

I really liked that slide on the 20-20-20 rule every 20 minutes take a break and look at something that's 20 feet away for 20 seconds. I thought that was good. I think you could couple that with, you know, the standing, do a lap around the house and get back at it so I think the 20-20-20 is just easy to remember.

Let's see.

Do you have any specific suggestions for ergonomic chairs or back cushions to help modify a desk chair? Tatum, do you have any input on ergonomic chairs or cushions?

>> TATUM STOREY: Yeah, so it all is really dependent on the individual and the setup that they have. We can't really recommend or endorse anything. But we do have a page on adjustable office chairs on our website that kind of learning disabilities some of the products that we typically send out and hear good things from. It can be found on our website by looking at adjustable workstations for office settings. Ergonomic and adjustable office chairs, as well.

>> LISA MATHESS: Okay and then I had another attendee chime in on the cold hand from mouse use they said the reason the mouse hand is colder is probably because the mouse is not aligned right. Too high and it pinches the shoulder muscle I have the same issue the issue is to -- the solution is to lower the mouse. Okay that's a very good tip. Good insight, for sure.

When granting an employee to work from home, do you have to implement it ASAP or are employers allowed some window time to make arrangements to implement that? I mean under ADA there's not a required timeframe to respond a accommodation requests. The EEOC just says act as quickly as possible. Unnecessary delays could be problematic. And if that means looking at temporary accommodations or trial accommodations until you make that final decision I think that would be better business practice than just forcing people out on leave and not implementing anything in the meantime but we really need to be mindful and kind of get accommodations done as quickly as possible. There shouldn't be those unnecessary delays.

How does an employer conduct an ergonomic assessment for an employee working from home during COVID-19? You can't maintain social distancing.

Well on a slide that Tatum had, she did discuss virtual ergonomic assessment providers. So if you go to our website at the ergonomic page, we do have a hyperlink of vendor learning disabilities that includes virtual ergonomic assessments. So that would be a professional doing that.

And the cost can vary so that's one thing to look into if the employee is not comfortable doing a self-assessment.

Let's see.

Is it appropriate for employers to respond to an employee needing a sit-stand at home to tell them they can't work from home and must return to the office? The office is deemed safe. But all other staff are allowed to work from home.

I'm going to jump in here and answer this.

Ultimately employers are permitted to choose among effective options when it comes to choosing effective -- effective options for accommodations but I think you need to keep in mind dignity issues if everyone in the office can telework you don't want to have a person with a disability jumping through unnecessary hoops and more barriers for that person. Especially in the case if they can just transfer their office equipment to their home office, so you're not purchasing a second set of equipment, you're just letting them take it home. I think that's a win-win for both parties and should be considered.

Yeah, and as Tatum said we don't endorse or recommend one product or vendor over another so in regards to price ranges, you would have to reach out to the vendor specifically.

Can you give me more information on the virtual work site evaluations. We had one done at the JAN office a couple of years ago. And we sent in pictures. And they did a virtual Zoom call and really kind of assessed how my colleague was working. And really gave like practical tips and equipment ideas with things we already had even. Like I said, those virtual work site evaluations those are linked on the ergonomics page so if you go to askJAN.org go by topic and scroll down to ergonomics, everything will be hyperlinked there but don't hesitate to send an email to JAN at askJAN.org if you have specific questions we're not getting to.

Okay. And another attendee chimed in about the cold hand due to the mouse.

It's most likely related to static muscle tension in the hand which is reducing circulation. Start using the mouse left handed. Take more frequent stretch breaks for the hand. And increase your physical activity out of work. Again, great information.

Did you say we need to provide ergonomic chairs at home due to the pandemic? I would say you need to consider it. EEOC has made a pretty strong stance if you provided an ergonomic chair preCOVID, then that person, you know, should get that accommodation absent hardship. And even in the cases that someone didn't have an ergonomic chair preCOVID, if they need it now and they have an ADA-covered disability, again, you're going to want to consider furnishing that ergonomic chair absent hardship.

Okay. One more comment about the cold hand with the mouse. Usually it has to do with posture and potential compression on the edge of the workstation. Not a product solution. Also good information.

Tatum, do you have any comments on like lighting? I know we kind of talked about what is proper lighting but there really isn't a one-size-fits-all. Do you have any input on that?

>> TATUM STOREY: Yeah, just like you said, it's really dependent on the situation. And the individual making sure that the distance is you know ergonomically sound is always a good idea. The JAN page has a couple product pages related to lighting that you can check out on our solutions page. There's alternative lighting where you'll see some product ideas, non-fluorescent lighting to combat flues errant setting full spectrum natural lighting products, LED lighting, modified lighting, reading and highlighted products it's all dependent on the setting that an individual is in and what they need.

>> LISA MATHESS: Yeah and I think too little lighting is just as problematic as too much lighting so those glare filters are also helpful.

>> TATUM STOREY: Definitely.

>> LISA MATHESS: So really it's an individualized assessment.

And I think that's about all the time we have today. So I want to thank you for attending. And a special thanks to all of our speakers. I also want to thank Alternative Communication Services for providing the net captioning.

If you need additional information about anything we talked about today, please let us know. And if you want to discuss an accommodation, please feel free to contact us at JAN. We hope the program was useful. As mentioned earlier an evaluation form will automatically pop up on your screen in another window as soon as we're finished. We appreciate your feedback so we hope you'll take a minute to complete the form.

Again, thank you for attending.