

Safety Bulletin

Sit/stand desktop units

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Introduction

The purpose of this safety bulletin is to provide users with guidance regarding purchasing a sit/stand workstation.

The primary intent of a sit/stand workstation is to provide opportunity for postural variation – an important strategy in the management of musculoskeletal and cardio-metabolic health. Wherever possible a fully electric height adjustable desk is the preferred option.

If not practicable and a desk top solution is required there are some important things to consider. These include the method of raising and lowering the unit and whether the dimensions of the unit will comfortably accommodate all equipment and work requirements.

A review of some common units has revealed that there are potential risks associated with their use. This includes:

Free standing electric height adjustable desks

Freestanding desks with electric touch button height adjustability (incorporating the recommended height range of 625-1275mm) will accommodate the greatest range of users regardless of body dimensions or injury symptoms /conditions including mobility impaired users in wheelchairs. These desks come in a range of shapes and sizes, can be customised if required.



Key features:

- Allow all desk top equipment to raise/lower with the user
- Obviate need for footstools. Smallest users can comfortably support the feet on the floor
- Available from University of Melbourne preferred suppliers through iProcurement
- Important to consider location of power points and cabling

Standesk

This unit is a suitable alternative to an electric desk if the features below are taken into consideration.

The Standesk is an electric height adjustable portable platform with electric sensor touch button height adjustability. It sits 'freestanding' on a desktop and is considered a suitable alternative to an electric height adjustable desk.

Key features:

- Single or dual monitor capability is available. iMac convertible with iMac VESA adapter
- A main platform and a keyboard platform with suitable dimensions to accommodate standard computer peripherals. If required a document holder (3M inline DH630 model) or a small microdesk can be positioned between the 2 platforms. A non-numeric keyboard will enable more space for comfortable mouse navigation.
- Stable and has a lifting capacity of 50kg. No inbuilt anti-collision technology.
- 12 mm thick keyboard platform adds minimal height to desktop when in a lowered (seated) position



- Maximum height of keyboard platform is 1165mm (when put on a standard desk height of 720mm). This is high enough to accommodate up to 90% of users in a standing posture. Note that users above 90th percentile standing height will require a higher than 720mm seated desk therefore the vertical height range of this unit should not be a limiting factor for taller users.
- Limited independent monitor height adjustment (40mm) available. Midpoint of monitor will sit between 400 and 440mm above work platform. This will enable a comfortable neck posture for most users. Monitor has tilt, pan and rotation (landscape to portrait) capability.
- Available from University of Melbourne preferred suppliers through iProcurement – supplier: BackCare and Seating

Switch desk

This unit is a suitable alternative to an electric desk if the features below are taken into consideration.

The Switch desk is an electric height adjustable portable platform with electric sensor touch button height adjustability. It sits ‘freestanding’ on a desktop or can be bolted through a desktop.

Key Features

- Single, dual or triple monitor capability is available. iMac convertible with iMac VESA adapter
- Has a single work platform with suitable dimensions to accommodate standard computer peripherals and if required a document holder (3M inline DH630 model) or a small microdesk. A non-numeric keyboard will enable more room for mouse navigation.
- Stable and has inbuilt anti-collision technology.
- 25mm thick keyboard platform adds height to desktop when in a lowered (seated) position which may increase load to neck and shoulders for smaller users.
- Maximum height is 1380mm (on typical seated desk height of 720mm). This is high enough to accommodate up to approximately 95% of users in a standing posture. Vertical height range of this unit should not be a limiting factor for even the tallest standing user.
- Limited independent monitor height adjustment (40mm) available. Midpoint of monitor will sit between 400 and 440mm above work platform. This will enable a comfortable neck posture for most users. Monitor has tilt, pan and rotation (landscape to portrait) capability.
- Available from University of Melbourne preferred suppliers through iProcurement – Console Concepts.



Quickstand desktop unit

This unit has some design limitations that should be taken into consideration prior to purchase

The Quickstand is a manually height adjustable stable metal work platform which clamps to the rear of the desk with a central stalk along which the monitor tracks.

Key Features

- Single dual or triple monitor capability is available. iMac convertible with iMac VESA adapter
- Force to raise/lower platform is minimal.
- Platform dimensions are limited – should be used with a non-numeric keyboard as mouse navigation space limited. Will not fit a document holder or microdesk.
- Will not fit to all corner workstations or a rectilinear workstation deeper than 800mm.





- Maximum height is 1180mm (on typical seated desk height of 720mm). Will accommodate users up to approximately 186cm.
- The distance between the platform and monitor is narrow which may result in users stepping back from the platform to achieve a comfortable focal distance then reaching well forwards to use the keyboard.
- The monitor can be adjusted vertically independently of the work platform but requires specialist hand tools.
- Not available from University of Melbourne preferred suppliers.

Ergotron Workfit TL

Since electric sit/stand units have eliminated need to exert force height they are preferred over the workfit TL

The Ergotron Workfit TL is a manually height adjustable desktop unit with a work platform and a separate keyboard platform.

Key features

- Monitors sit directly on platform
- Force to raise/lower is minimal to moderate. Handles are located on the sides of the main platform close to the front edge.
- Platform dimensions are limited and can influence mouse/keying posture. A non-numeric slim keyboard is recommended. Work platform may accommodate a small document holder but not a microdesk. Maximum height is 1100mm (on typical seated desk height of 720mm). Will accommodate users up to approximately 180cm
- Wireless peripherals are preferred to prevent cables becoming tangled.
- Not available from University of Melbourne preferred suppliers.



Varidesk

Electric units have eliminated need for exerting force and are therefore preferred

The Varidesk is an early version of manually height adjustable sit/stand desktop mounted (non-fixed) units.

Key Features

- Handles are located midway along the sides of the main platform
- Raising and lowering the Varidesk involves bending and reaching away from the body to reach the handles and exerting moderate force. The force exerted is proportionate to the weight sitting on the platform – which may include multiple monitors and a range of other items. This combination of factors: posture, force and weight may be sufficient to cause strain in the shoulders, neck or back.
- Depending on the version, platform dimensions may be limited and impact on mouse/keying posture and most models will not accommodate a document holder or microdesk.
- Wireless peripherals are preferred for movement between platforms and to prevent cables becoming tangled.
- Maximum height is 1075mm (on typical seated desk height of 720mm). Will accommodate users up to approximately 178cm
- Not available from University of Melbourne preferred suppliers.



Wynston

This unit is not recommended.

The Wynston is a basic manually height adjustable sit/stand desktop unit. There are small and large units- the small being very limited in size. These units lack stability and the platform wobbles when typing.

Key features

- The primary concern with the Windsor relates to adjusting the height of the platform. It requires a wide bilateral reach to grasp the handles and forward torso flexion in conjunction with application of moderate force. The force or effort involved is proportionate to the weight on the platform. This combination of factors: posture, force and weight of platform involved in adjusting the unit may be sufficient to cause strain in the shoulders, neck or back
- Platform dimensions are limited and may impact on mouse/keying posture. Limited space for other items such a document holder or microdesk
- Maximum keyboard height is 1050mm (on typical seated desk height of 720mm). It will not accommodate users taller than 170cm.
- Not available from University of Melbourne preferred suppliers.



Health and safety purchasing requirements

Preferred products and their suppliers have been approved by the University of Melbourne and meet the University's purchasing policy and product evaluation guidelines. Ordering items from non-preferred suppliers may require completion of a [Health & Safety: Pre-purchase risk assessment checklist](#).