



“We-Safety” is a newsletter aimed at providing PolyU staff and students with information about how the University has been working to keep our community safe.

May **We** work together to achieve **Safety** on campus.

Health Tips for Working from Home Health Issues that often Neglected

Work from home (WFH) is not uncommon in recent years. With waves of COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns in some countries, many companies had no choice but to implement WFH arrangements in order to maintain their business operations. Since early 2022, some countries have lifted or relaxed their social distancing measures, and workers could go back to their offices and have normal social lives. Nevertheless, there are still some workers who are working from home, and are expected to return to their offices in phases.



In Hong Kong, the Government strongly appealed to all employers to allow their employees to WFH as far as possible to reduce the flow of people and social contacts in the community in the last few waves of COVID-19 in 2020 and 2022Q1. Though Hong Kong employees are quite familiar with the concept “work-from-home” arrangements, many of them, due to limited space, do often compete for workspace at home with family members or using bedroom as temporary office. Thus, the “work-from-home” arrangement triggered an intense information demand and online sharing such as useful tips on optimizing home office environment, health advice on prolonged use of display screen equipment, effective ways in dealing with family members when working at home, home office time management, etc.

However, many related health issues may not be properly addressed and often be neglected. This issue provides some simple but crucial health tips for those working from home.

Keep Hydrated



Always drink enough water, consuming 1.9 liters a day. Dehydration can lead to headaches and fatigue, which are both not good for productivity. It is important for good health. Water is the best choice to keep hydrated but drinking moderate amounts of coffee and tea is also acceptable, just do not overdo the caffeine.

The setting of workplace at home may not be the same as office, people may think it's easy to get some drinks from kitchen at home and do not placing a cup nearby. At the end, the drinks are forgotten. It is suggested to keep a water bottle on your desk / nearby you, just as the same as you do in office.

Eat the Lunch

When people work at office, there is specific lunch time and people may have lunch outside with colleagues. But when people are working from home, the lunch maybe forgotten or having it in the very late afternoon.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend not skipping any meals, including breakfast. People are reminded to schedule a timeslot for their breakfast and lunch. If needed, set an alarm on phone to remind the meal time. When it's the time to have meal, take a break from work and sit away from the computer/work desk to enjoy the lunch and relax. It's important to know hunger signs and realize that not eating can affect alertness and productivity.

Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals and drink enough water when working at home.

Get Good Sleep

Working from home may also changes people's sleeping pattern.

Dr Melissa Milanak, associate professor, Medical University of South Carolina, shared the relation between WFH and bedtime. Dr Milanak expressed that people feel they have more time as they do not have to go to workplace physically, it is common for people to have later bedtime. Also, some of them may not have consistency of a regular bedtime. "Now we could stay up as late as we wanted to and our bodies didn't know when they should feel tired", Dr Milanak said.



Consistent and healthy sleep routines are part of good sleep hygiene. It can provide people a good rest from a good night. Good-quality sleep and regular sleeping pattern benefit the productivity and quality of work. Try to maintain your regular sleeping pattern and stick to good sleep practices, it is important to allow enough sleep time. People need at least 7 hours of good quality sleep.

Take a Break

When working at office, getting coffee or talking to colleagues provide short breaks from work and to rest eyes and head. For working from home, many people would like to speed up the work or enhance efficiency as the working environment may not be as good as office, they do not take any break at all.

Making time for breaks is important to help manage feelings of stress and regeneration enhance the work efficiency.

Try to take regular screen breaks, even just five to ten minutes of short breaks each hour can help the productivity. It helps one to concentrate on work and to feel more focused when you return.

Stay Connected to Others

WFH makes people difficult to connect with colleagues in person. People tend to be by themselves most of the time and time social lives reduced. Maintaining healthy relationships with others is important for mental wellbeing.



People living with family members or housemates can avoid loneliness by spending time with them. They eat together, playing games or watching drama series together outside office hours. For people who live alone, it is also important to think about ways to stay in touch with friends and family by speaking with them on phone or video calls.

If someone experiencing stress or feelings of isolation that seem overwhelming, it is suggested to seek help or talk to a therapist.

It is important to plan your work, including lunch break, the meal, the sleeping time and screen break. The CDC also recommends to have daily life routines outside of work. It helps reducing feelings of stress.

Source:

- ❖ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US
<https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2020/11/20/working-from-home/>
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/losing_weight/eating_habits.html
- ❖ The National Health Service, UK
<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/coronavirus/simple-tips-to-tackle-working-from-home/>
<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/coronavirus/mental-wellbeing-while-staying-at-home/>
- ❖ Medical News Today
<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/working-from-home-health-tips#summary>
<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/306638#recommended-intake>
- ❖ Mind Impact Consulting
<https://mindimpactconsulting.com/interviews/>
- ❖ Health Corner, U.S. News and World Report
<https://health.usnews.com/health-care/for-better/articles/6-tips-for-taking-care-of-yourself-while-working-from-home>

We – Learn

Public Online Talks for more Health Tips

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of Department of Health launched a programme called “Shall We Talk”, a series of online health talks providing mental and physical health tips under the current epidemic situation. Videos of the online health talks (in Cantonese) have been uploaded to the CHP’s YouTube channel for public viewing. You may visit the channel for the following topics:

During the period of pandemic, the University organized an online health promotional campaign namely “In Times of Facing Pandemic” with support from Health and Safety Office (HSO). At the campaign, the University shared professionals’ knowledge on precautionary measures, heard participants’ sharing, experience or concerns in dealing with pandemic. It aimed at joining hands to pitch in and get through this difficult time with the University community.

- ❖ Overeating and Emotional Eating (過量進食與情緒性進食)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDdmlAENQow>
- ❖ Healthy Diet to Fight the Virus with Healthy Snack Cooking Demonstration (抗疫飲食 ABC 小食示範)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XhnZSQn5Hgc>
- ❖ Maintaining Good Sleep During the COVID-19 Pandemic (睡好好抗疫)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hi56bga9B5A>

- ❖ Mental Health and COVID-19: How to Maintain our Mental Health During the Pandemic (抗疫精神健康：促進疫情下的精神健康)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGBkEgalhS8>
- ❖ Positive Psychology: Finding Out Well-being During the Pandemic (正向心理學：在疫情中找到幸福感)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YvGmZLhdZE>



Breathability and Comfortability of Face Mask

In the recent two years, we are required to wear face masks in workplaces and public places due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some might feel that it's hard to breathe when wearing the mask.

The Occupational Safety & Health Council (OSHC) commissioned PolyU to conduct a study from February to October 2021 on the impact of different breathability and shape of face masks on people who wear face mask to have physical activities. It is found that for people wearing face masks with high breathability, it is less likely to experience shortness of breath and their bodies will recover quicker after exercise.

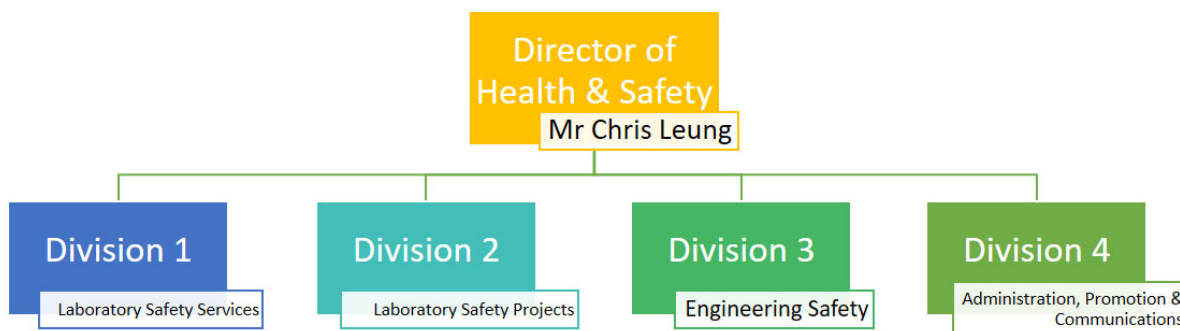
The OSHC suggests people to look for both filtration efficiency as well as breathability when choosing masks.

We encourage you to read the Executive Summary (click [HERE](#)) and Full Report (click [HERE](#)) for details of the study and the ways to compare breathability.

We – Update

HSO has been seeking continual enhancement of our services to support the University's various activities. We aim to provide proper and timely information and services to our students and staff.

With support from the University's Senior Management and as a part of service enhancement, HSO has re-organized from five to four divisions with effect from 11 April 2022 to support the University's research development and other emerging health and safety issues.



The four divisions are as follows:

- ❖ Division 1 - Laboratory Safety Services
- ❖ Division 2 - Laboratory Safety Projects
- ❖ Division 3 - Engineering Safety
- ❖ Division 4 - Administration, Promotion & Communications

Students and staff may visit HSO website at <https://www.polyu.edu.hk/hso/about-hso/organization-and-functions/> for updated functions and scopes of each division.

We – Listen

We *value* your opinions and We always *Listen*.

Let's Exercise Safely

With the re-opening of on-campus sports facilities from 21 April 2022, HSO collaborates with the Counselling and Wellness Section of Student Affairs Office to release a poster series of “Let’s Exercise Safely (做運動。最緊要人安全)”. This series highlights key safety tips for exercise and doing sports on site.



You may visit HSO website at <https://www.polyu.edu.hk/hso/news-and-events/posters/lets-exercise-safely/> for the poster series.

Sports facilities users are advised to revisit “PAR-Q”, a simple self-screening tool, to help formulate personal exercise plan.

You may visit <https://polyu.hk/tYIKN> for “PAR-Q”.



QR Code to revisit “PAR-Q”

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We-Challenge - Safety Quiz on Health and Safety Poster Series

HSO is now organizing an online safety quiz of “We-Challenge – Safety Quiz on Health & Safety Poster Series” from 27 April 2022. One set of safety quiz will be released on each day from 27 to 29 April 2022 respectively.



PolyU 85th THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY 香港理工大學 Health & Safety Office 健康及安全事務處

27-29/4/2022

We-Challenge

Safety Quiz on Health & Safety Poster Series

安全問答大挑戰

Accept the Challenge to Win the Prize

接受挑戰、贏取獎品

The Safety Quiz **will be closed on 6 May 2022**. Please click the following hyperlinks to participate the quiz and win the prize:

- ❖ Day 1 (27 April) <https://www.polyu.edu.hk/mysurvey2/index.php/958953?lang=en>
- ❖ Day 2 (28 April) <https://www.polyu.edu.hk/mysurvey2/index.php/386996?lang=en>
- ❖ Day 3 (29 April) <https://www.polyu.edu.hk/mysurvey2/index.php/673641?lang=en>

For details, please visit HSO webpage of events at <https://www.polyu.edu.hk/hso/news-and-events/events/2022/we-challenge---online-safety-quiz/>

We-People

Vivian LAU - Chinese Language Centre

Vivian has joined the University for 25 years and is now serving the Chinese Language Centre (CLC). Appointed as Departmental Health and Safety Officer (DHSO) since 2020, Vivian demonstrates good works in administering health and safety matters, liaises with centre colleagues proactively to follow-up their health and safety concerns and delivers them useful health and safety information. Last year, she was nominated by Dr Ken Cheng, Director of Chinese Language Centre, as outstanding occupational safety and health employee.



Safety Culture at Workplace

Vivian thanked the support from the Director and management team from CLC so that safety culture is established among colleagues. “Dr Cheng and the senior management of CLC put safety first and they are very supportive on the health and safety issues relating to our colleagues, students and centre users. They listen to colleagues’ concerns and react quickly and accordingly, such as the anti-epidemic measures recently,” Vivian said.

Vivian recognized that working in an environment with safety culture, colleagues are willing to share their concerns, views and suggestions on relevant health and safety issues. Through the communication and discussion, DHSO is able to address safety needs of their students and colleagues and they, in return, know more about DHSO’s works.

It enhances colleagues’ awareness of health and safety not only at work but also in daily lives.



Ms Vivian Lau, DHSO of CLC



Anti-epidemic measures implemented at CLC’s meeting room



CLC’s notice board to share health and safety information and message

Communication with HSO

She is grateful for the helpful attitude of HSO colleagues during the course of communication. Vivian expressed, “when I and my colleagues have safety enquiries, we often receive prompt reply and suggestion from HSO.”

Vivian also appreciated the publication and promotion arranged by HSO. “The health and safety newsletter and poster series helped a lot in the past two years. When I have something not sure, I always check the promotional materials first before asking and find my answers there,” Vivian reflected.

“It made me feeling good that I am not working alone. My colleagues and HSO are working together with me on provision of safe workplace and learning facilities for staff and students of the centre,” Vivian thanked.