

Your Guide To Buying a Standing Desk



Your Guide to Buying a Standing Desk



The popularity of standing desks has exploded in the last few years but the variety of options makes it hard for buyers to decide which desk is best for them.

This guide examines the things you should consider, to help you make an informed decision about which type of [standing desk](#) is right for your specific needs.

About Standing Desks

What is a Standing Desk?

“Standing desk” is a broad term, and includes any kind of desk that you can stand up at. This could be a simple, fixed-height desk that you can only stand at, but most people prefer a height-adjustable, sit stand desk.

Also known as sit to stand and stand up desks, these allow you to comfortably stand while you work and then adjust the height of the desk to sit. Having that flexibility is very important so you can easily alternate between sitting and standing throughout the day.

Why Use a Standing Desk?

Sitting for long periods of time has been dubbed ‘the new smoking’. Research into the health benefits of using a standing desk is ongoing, but more and more people are choosing to stand or alternate between sitting and standing during the day.

They do this because standing at your desk can help you move more during the work week. Research has shown that standing desks help you burn more calories than you would while sitting. Another study found that standing desks significantly increased productivity - workers using sit stand desks were 45% more productive than their seated colleagues.



FAQs about Standing Desks

Read the responses to some of the most common questions about standing desks.

Are standing desks really beneficial?

Research shows that alternating between the standing and sitting position throughout the workday is best.

A ratio of 1:1 or 2:1 sitting versus standing time appears to be optimal for comfort and energy levels. A sit stand desk allows you to move between the two positions several times a day.

How long should you stand at a standing desk?

While the research is still in its early stages, it shows that you should [spend one hour standing for every one to two hours sitting](#).

Stand for as long as it's comfortable as long periods of standing can cause lower back pain and problems with leg muscles, tendons and varicose veins. If you feel any pain, change the desk to the seated position and sit down for a while.

How do I choose a standing desk?

Choose your standing desk based on the equipment you use.

The heavier your workstation setup, the more heavy-duty your desk will need to be. If you are short or don't have a lot of upper body strength, you may struggle to use a poor quality gas-lift table and are best suited to an electric desk, so it rises with the push of a button. If you're tall, you may need an electric standing desk because they raise the highest.

What size standing desk do I need?

You will need to choose a standing desk with a work surface that's large enough to handle all of your computer equipment. Standing desks have a weight rating, so ensure your equipment is within the weight range.

Types of Standing Desks

It seems every week new Standing Desks appear on the market. But if you cut through all the noise there are only 3 main types of standing desks. with manual or electric options in each group These are:

Desk Converters

Desk Converters are units which sit on top of an existing desk or platform and have a separate worktop which can be raised and lowered.

Desk Converters are ideal for offices that already have built-in desks or limited available space that doesn't allow for any additional furniture. Desktop converters are also a good choice if you are on a tighter budget and want to keep your existing desk.

Manual Desk Converters

As the name suggests, Manual units have no power and are usually operated when the user pulls a lever at the side of the unit. The desk rises or lowers using gas struts or springs to assist.



Your Guide to Buying a Standing Desk

High-end converters like the Humancale Quickstand don't even need a lever. Instead they use a weighted counterbalance system that makes it smoother and easier to adjust the height.

The pros and cons of a Manual Desk Converter are:

- Cheap
- Very few come with a Monitor arm
- Will not handle heavy loads
- Limited height range (for people over 180 cm)
- Can be difficult to use for people with a petite frame
- Some popular models pose a tipping hazard when raised
- People with injury find them too hard or stressful on the body.

Electric Desk Converters

An Electric Standing Desk Converter is powered by an electric motor to rise and lower the platform.

Generally simple to use they are a much better option for users who may have an existing back complaint, or to support two monitor screens.



Your Guide to Buying a Standing Desk

Electric models are now becoming cheaper and the standard.

The pros and cons of a Manual Desk Converter are:

- Easy to use
- Some models come with very good monitor arms as standard
- Good for use with two monitors
- Most models come with programmable height buttons
- Most models come with reminder (to stand) alarm
- Generally good value
- Excellent option for where space on the desktop is scarce.
- Size of platforms can be limiting to work process

Standing Desks

Standing Desks are complete desks in which the whole desk top can be raised and lowered. The advantage of a Standing Desk is that as the top is moved so does everything that is placed upon it, meaning very little disruption to your working style.



Your Guide to Buying a Standing Desk

Manual Standing Desks (Crank Handle)

The most common type of Manual Standing Desk is adjusted by a crank handle mechanism. This means every time the desk needs to be moved the user must manually wind the handle. Experience show us that manual desks are generally too hard to use and in the end do not get used at all.

As such we do not generally recommend Manual Standing Desks.

The pros and cons of a manual Standing Desk are:

- Cheap
- Generally limited range of height and most do not raise high enough.
- Low weight capacity
- Limited range of sizes (due to weight and manual operation).
- Slow to change height
- Can be difficult to use . People with injury find them too hard or stressful on the body.

For these reasons, most manual desks are generally too hard to use and in the end do not get used at all.

They may be cheap - but in the end not great value.



Your Guide to Buying a Standing Desk

Electric Standing Desks

These are complete desks that use electric motors with push-button controls to raise and lower the desktop.

Often a little more expensive than other options an electric Standing desk is generally deemed to be the best ergonomically and the best value option.

Single Motor Desks.

The cheapest of this style of desk they have only one motor to drive all the legs and the desk top. The motor is connected to the legs via an aluminium shaft to a gearbox in each leg.

Beware of large L-shaped (corner) workstations with one motor. Generally in this situation the motor has not changed but an extra gearbox and shaft are added and the weight of the desk has significantly increased.

Generally best suited for very small desks and domestic uses.

Where ever possible we recommend a desk that has some form of bracing between the legs (sometimes called a modesty panel. This adds stability to the frame when raised to its highest point and keeps the legs straight.

The pros and cons of a Single Motor Electric Standing Desk are:

- Easier to use than a manual option
- Can be very noisy
- Suitable for small tops and domestic situations
- Limited top sizes and colours.
- Can have programmable pre-set height buttons and timer
- Can struggle with heavy loads and larger tops especially L-Shaped tops
- Cheaper than multiple motor desks



Your Guide to Buying a Standing Desk

Multiple Motor Desks

As the name suggests this type of desk has multiple motors to drive it - Usually one in each leg (two for a straight desk and three for an L-Shaped desk).

They are quieter, have a higher payload capacity and generally smoother to operate.

As a result they are more stable than a single motor desk and suitable for commercial situations.

Where ever possible we recommend a desk that has some form of bracing between the legs (sometimes called a modesty panel. This adds stability to the frame when raised to is highest point and keeps the legs straight.

The pros and cons of a Electric Standing Desk are:

1. Can have programmable pre-set height buttons and timer
2. Easier to use than a manual option
3. Smoother and quieter than single motor options
4. Top size and colours may be cutomised to suit decor
5. Longer life
6. More stable at height
7. More expensive than other options
8. Best option ergonomically



Portable Standing Desks and Carts

For workers that need to move around during the day at work, a portable standing desk or cart is ideal. Perfect for medical practices where the worker moves between rooms with their laptop, for teachers moving around the classroom and mechanics moving around their workshop. They are also ideal for the home office worker that wants to work in different rooms of the house.

Medical grade carts are especially designed for heavy grade environments and are often suitable for hygienic cleaning.

Depending on your requirements, you could get a smaller portable desk that just has enough space for a laptop and a mouse, or a larger unit that also has a monitor arm like the Ergotron Neo-Flex LCD Cart.

Because of their smaller size and the need for electricity, most carts and Portable Standing Desks are manually operated.

The pros and cons of a Portable Standing Desk or Cart:

- Can be very expensive
- Very versatile
- Very limited space on top
- Single monitor use only - or laptops
- Large variety of accessories and options available
- Not suitable as day to day desk



Things to Consider When Choosing a Standing Desk

The sort of work you do, the tools you use or any health issues will determine what type of standing desk converter is best for you. Here are several things to consider when choosing a desk converter,

Monitor Set Up

Whether you are using one or multiple monitors, will have a direct effect on the type of converter that will suit you best. If you use a laptop only, the use of an external keyboard and mouse may also be needed.

If you are using multiple monitors their size and weight must be taken into consideration. If the monitors are too large they may overhang the unit and be unstable therefore unsafe.

If the monitors are too heavy, it will be hard to raise the desk without considerable effort and force. Alternatively, when the units are overloaded and trying to be lowered, the weight can overpower the struts or springs and the units can crash to the bottom.

Monitors that Adjust

If you need to move the position of one or more monitors, then you need to consider a monitor arm when choosing your desk. Some desks aren't as suitable as others for a monitor arm to be attached to the back.

Paperwork and Books

Some professions need to refer to heavy books while working. You will need a large flat working area that can take the size and weight of an open book.

If you need to type or data enter using papers, your biggest concern is where the document holder will sit. You need a desk large enough that the document holder can sit to the side of your monitor. Some desk converters only have room for the document holder above the keyboard which then obscures the view of the monitor.

Pre-Existing Injury

If you have a pre existing injury it is advised that you first talk to your Healthcare Professional before buying a standing desk. Some injuries may be aggravated by standing or the motion of using a desk. Manually operated units are not recommended in these situations

Recommend: Electric Sit Stand Desk, Electric Converter Desks

Height Of The User

Not all sit stand desks are a good fit for every body size and shape. Most products are designed for adults who are average in height and weight. If you are taller, shorter, big or small framed, some desks are better suited to you than others.

Sit stand desks are designed to be ergonomic to use but also need to be easy to adjust without risking an injury. Consider some of the following points before making your sit stand desk selection.

The Best Height Adjustable Desk for Tall People

Anyone with a height of around 185 cm or more needs to consider which type of sit stand desk they use. Some standing desk converters don't rise high enough for their arms to be at the correct angle when using the keyboard. Other converters are not as stable and if a tall or heavy person leans on the desk edge, there is a risk of them toppling over. Tall workers are best suited to an electric desk as they can extend high enough, offer the most stability and weight capacity. Check the specifications and make sure the desk can be raised high enough for you to work comfortably.

The Best Height Adjustable Desk for Smaller People

If you are less than 165 cm in height or a small build, you may find it difficult to move some standing desk converters up and down. When a desk is loaded with monitors and a keyboard, it can be difficult to push down if the gas lift system isn't of good quality.

When a standing desk converter is raised to its full height, it may be higher than some workers' shoulders, so they don't have the strength and weight to push the desk back down.

Your Guide to Buying a Standing Desk

The handle used to move the desk can be located away from the edge, under the desk, making it difficult to use for someone with small hands. These converter desks require reasonably strong, large hands to pull the lever to move the desk with ease.

Recommended: Electric Sit Stand Desk

Sensible Shoes

It sounds logical but wearing a good pair of supportive shoes can really make a difference when standing at a sit stand desk.

Too many people insist on wearing inappropriate footwear such as high heels and wonder why they find it uncomfortable to stand while they work.

Keep Moving & Use an Anti Fatigue Mat

We recommend you keep moving around while standing at your desk to avoid fatigue. A good way to do this is by using a padded anti fatigue mat.

A mat like the Topo Anti Fatigue Standing Mat has contours and different shapes that allow you to keep changing your standing position in a natural way. Make sure you get a mat that is lightweight and easy to move out of the way when you want to lower your desk and sit down for a while.

If you have a back injury avoid a mat as you will have to bend to pick it up when ever you wish to use your chair and sit.



Scenarios - Your Setup and Type of Work

The sort of work you do and the tools you use to do your job will determine what type of sit stand desk is best for you. Here are several scenarios and our recommendations for the most suitable sit stand desk.

Scenario #1 - Laptop Only

Most standing desk converters are not suitable for using with only a laptop unless you use an external keyboard because they have two separate parts – a keyboard platform and monitor or work surface platform. Your laptop may not safely fit on the keyboard area so you need one flat area to place your laptop on. You have the lightest computer setup, so you don't need to be concerned about the weight of your equipment.

Recommend: Any Electric or Portable Standing Desk

Scenario #2 - Keyboard & One Monitor

This equipment configuration gives you the most options in sit stand desks. With only one monitor you don't need to worry about the weight or space your equipment needs - you can choose almost any type of sit stand desk. Your height and body shape will be the main deciding factor rather than your computer setup.

Recommend: Electric Sit Stand Desk, Converter, larger Portable Standing Desks

Scenario #3 - Keyboard & Two Monitors

The weight and space required for your equipment is your biggest concern with this scenario. You need a sit stand desk that is large, strong and stable enough to hold the monitors. Before purchasing make sure the desk can accommodate the weight of your equipment and you will have enough available space for any paperwork, stationery etc.

Recommend: Electric Sit Stand Desk, larger Converter Desks

Scenario #4 - Keyboard, Monitor and Document Holder

If you need to type or data enter using papers, your biggest concern is where the document holder will sit. You need a desk large enough that the document holder can sit to the side of your monitor. Some desk converters only have room for the document holder above the keyboard which then obscures the view of the monitor.

Recommend: Electric Sit Stand Desk, select Converter Desks

Scenario #5 - Keyboard, Monitor and Books

Some professions need to refer to heavy books while working. You need a large flat working area that can take the size and weight of an open book.

Recommend: Electric Sit Stand Desk

Scenario #6 - Monitors that Adjust

If you need to move the position of one or more monitors, then you need to consider a monitor arm when choosing your desk. Some desks aren't as suitable as others for a monitor arm to be attached to the back. Not all office walls can have a monitor arm attached either.

Recommend: Electric Sit Stand Desk with a movable Monitor Arm

Ergolink - here to help

If you have any queries about the best Standing Desk for you, check them out at our Perth store, or buy online from our range of height adjustable desks. at www.ergolink.com.au.

For personal advice call one of our ergonomic experts on (08) 9240 7066 or contact us online.

ergolink

Advanced
Ergonomics

Ergolink - Advanced Ergonomics
Unit 18, 82 Erindale Road
BALCATTa,
Western Australia 6021
(08) 9240 7066
Sales@erolink.com.au
www.ergolink.com.au