

What VPNs Can and Can't Do

Virtual private networks (VPNs) are becoming more common. Many people use VPNs to establish an encrypted connection over a public network or to add privacy and security.

Think of a VPN as a private tunnel. Connect to the internet using a VPN, and your device sends and receives data that others can't access. Many find this useful when connecting to a public Wi-Fi network at a cafe, airport, or hotel.

People also use VPNs to hide their IP addresses. Maybe they don't want internet service providers (ISPs), government agencies, or third parties tracking them online. With a VPN, the sites see the VPN server's address, not yours. This masks your location and helps protect your privacy.

Others use VPNs to get around access restrictions based on geography. A different VPN server location can enable access to otherwise blocked online content.

So, a VPN can do a lot of useful things. Nevertheless, it can't do everything people sometimes expect.

What a VPN can't hide

Yes, a VPN can hide your IP address, geolocation, personal information, and browsing activity. Here's what it can't do.

#1 Guarantee absolute anonymity.

Continuing the tunnel analogy, if you turn left or right once you're through the tunnel, that's up to you. It's the same with a VPN. It can get you securely to a site, such as Facebook or Netflix, but once you connect and sign in, they'll know it's you and still be able to track your activity.

Plus, VPN providers may keep logs of your online activities. If that's an issue for you, choose a reputable provider and review their privacy policy.

#2 Save you from yourself.

If you enter your credit card information on a suspect website, the VPN won't stop you. Even if you're using a VPN, you'll still want to be careful about financial fraud and use a secure payment method.

#3 Stop malware or viruses.

Browsing the internet using a VPN does not prevent malicious software. To stay safe online, install a good antivirus program. Then, keep it patched and update regularly.

#4 Hide your MAC address.

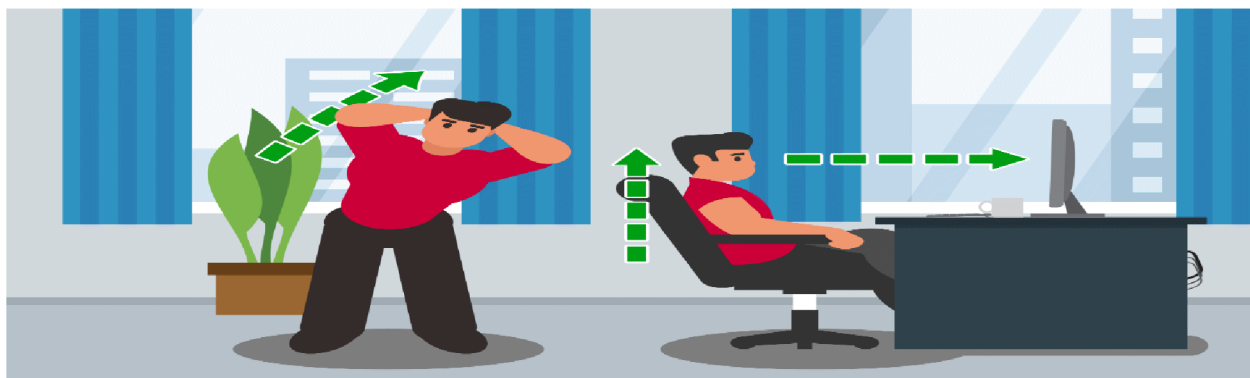
What's a MAC address? That's your device's Media Access Control address. Your IP address can change, but a MAC address is unique to your computer, smartphone, or other device. If you want to hide this address for extra security and privacy, you'll have to take added measures.

#5 Get around data-usage restrictions.

Using a VPN doesn't hide how much data you're using in a given month. So, any data limitations from your ISP will still apply.

Use VPNs wisely

A VPN can add privacy and security when you're browsing. It can help protect your personal data, hide your IP address, and encrypt your Web traffic, but it can't do everything. You'll still want to have appropriate security measures in place.



What You Need to Know About Desk Ergonomics

Getting the job done is the focus. Many of us don't spend much time thinking about how we're setting up our workspace to do our tasks, yet desk ergonomics can increase productivity, lessen muscle fatigue, and cut work-related aches.

In a typical office setting, someone has thought about ergonomics. Most people have a chair at a desk where they can sit with a posture that reduces the risk of pain. Good workspace positioning will see your:

- feet flat on the floor, thighs parallel, and knees bent to 90 degrees;
- elbows comfortably below shoulders, bent at 90 degrees, and close to the body (without being jammed against you);
- shoulders relaxed and back;
- back against the chair with your body aligned so that your shoulders are over your hips, and your head, over your shoulders;
- Eyes looking at the top of the screen (rather than up or down at it).

Anything else risks putting your body out of alignment, which can stress your body and lead to painful issues. For

example, carpal tunnel syndrome, muscle strain, and lower-back injury.

Rethinking your work-from-home posture

Sorry. Working from bed or lounging in a cushioned chair isn't going to put you in the right ergonomic position.

It's best to replicate a traditional workstation. Start with how you sit: Get a desk and office chair, or at least sit at a table. If your feet don't touch the ground, get a footrest (or even use a stack of books). This helps get your thighs parallel and knees at 90 degrees.

Now, place your computer where you can keep your elbows bent and shoulders back. You want to hover your palms slightly over the keyboard as you type. If you have armrests, this can help you avoid slouching.

Your lower back is the next consideration. Having your back against the backrest can help your alignment. Office chairs are often designed with lower back support. If you don't have that, you could get a lumbar pillow to help. Otherwise, you might roll up a towel to put against the small of your back while sitting.

Also, consider your screen placement. You might need to raise or lower your monitor so that your eyes are in line with the top of the screen. Laptop users could need to get a separate screen or keyboard so that they can achieve the right angles at once.

Next steps

If you're a two-screen user, you can put the one you use most directly in front of you. If you work on both regularly, place them side by side, and angle them towards your seat. Tablet users may want to get a stand that puts it at eye level. Otherwise, switch up which hand you're using to hold it. Plus, if you're on the phone a lot, use hands-free or a headset to avoid a stiff neck.

Every 20 minutes or so plan to check in on your posture. Also, take 20 seconds to look at something 20 feet away from you to give your eyes a rest. Moving and stretching can give both your body and mind a break.

We can help with reconfiguring desk ergonomics as well as setting up both VPN's and antivirus solutions.

Contact us at 940-282-0290.