

PC/Work Area Ergonomics Checklist

Long hours on the computer can lead to aches and pains in your neck, shoulders, arms and hands. If you ignore these aches and continue working with improper work habits you may develop painful and disabling injuries. This Checklist will assist you with creating an ergonomic and user-friendly work area. Your campus may also offer a workstation ergonomic audit. Contact your health and safety unit for more information.

Please proceed with caution if you make changes to your workstation based on the contents of this document. What is right for one person may not be appropriate for another. Anytime you make changes to your workstation listen to you body. If you make changes and some or all of the discomfort or soreness goes away, good!.....you're probably on the right track. However, if you make changes to your set-up and your condition gets worse, the adjustment you made may not be appropriate. Listen to your body!! Read this document with discretion and adapt the information to fit your own specific needs.

	Y	N	NA	COMMENTS
A.				
Head is directly over shoulders				
Shoulders are relaxed				
Elbows are at 90° angle resting comfortably at side				Elbows and upper arms should be resting comfortably at side.
Wrists are straight, floating over wrist rest				Wrists should not be bent in any direction. Do not rest wrists on wrist pad while typing.
Knees are at 90° angle or greater				
Feet flat on floor or supported by footrest				Proper foot support also provides stability and support for the lower legs
Change positions periodically.				It is very important to change positions periodically. Sitting in one position or leaning on your arms for an extended period of time can interfere with circulation. Moving around can help with circulation and prevent you from putting pressure on one location for an extended period of time.
B. Workstation/Work Area - In general, you should adjust your chair first, your keyboard and mouse second, and your monitor and print material third.				
Work surface area is adequate for				There should be sufficient space for all

	Y	N	NA	COMMENTS
computer and materials				computer components and materials that are needed on the work surface.
Items that you use frequently (e.g., phone, document holder, mouse, dictionary, etc.) are placed within easy reach.				Keep your most frequently accessed items close to you to minimize the amount of reaching you have to do.
Use a phone headset if you talk on the phone a lot.				Talking on the phone with your neck bent to hold the receiver can cause neck, shoulder, and back discomfort. If you're on the phone a fair amount of time, a phone headset can prevent you from bending your neck and prevent or relieve neck, shoulder, and back discomfort.
Keyboard and mouse are directly in front of the operator. Keyboard and mouse are at comfortable height				<p>The recommended height favors a neutral posture and is usually between 23 and 28 inches.</p> <p>To prevent having to reach to the front or side, position the keyboard and pointing device (e.g., mouse, trackball, etc.) directly in front and close to you. Adjust the keyboard as low as possible without resting it on your legs so that your shoulders are not elevated during keyboard use. To do this, the keyboard and mouse should be on a thin (1 to 2 inches) surface, not on a desk with a drawer underneath. (The exception to this recommendation is if you need to look at the keys a lot. In that case, you should take typing lessons so you do not have to look at the keys or adjust the keyboard height up.)</p> <p>Adjust your work surface so the home row of your keyboard (the row which has the letters a,s,d.....) is at approximately elbow level. If your work surface is too high and not adjustable, adjust your chair to bring your elbows to the home row level of the keyboard. If you raise your chair make sure your feet are properly</p>

	Y	N	NA	COMMENTS
				<p>supported.</p> <p>Keyboard drawers or other types of keyboard support devices can increase the amount of desk space but can cause other problems. One problem with keyboard drawers and other types of keyboard supports is that they force you further away from your primary work surface, put your mouse at a higher level, and force you to reach to use your mouse and other accessories. Another problem with these types of devices is that they often interfere with the thigh clearance under your work surface.</p> <p>If you use a mouse, try to keep it as close to the centerline of your body as possible. Reaching for your input device or having it at a higher level than your keyboard can cause problems. Grasp the mouse lightly and loosely and keep your wrists straight.</p> <p>In general, your elbows are near your body and your forearms approximately parallel to the floor, with your forearms resting on either armrests or forearm supports. If you do not have armrests or forearm supports, your upper arms should hang comfortably at your sides. The slope of the keyboard may need to be adjusted so that your wrists are straight, and not bent back (extension) while you are typing. Type with your hands and wrists floating above the keyboard. Move your whole arm. Keep from bending your wrists, hands, or fingers sideways. Press the keys gently; do not bang them. Keep your shoulders, arms, hands, and fingers relaxed.</p>
Monitor is placed arm's length away from operator, either directly in front or slightly to one				Correct placement and adjustment of the monitor can reduce eye, shoulder, neck, and upper back fatigue. Bifocal and

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side of operator				<p>trifocal wearers have to pay particular attention to the placement of their monitor. Wearers of bifocals and trifocals often unknowingly tilt their heads backwards so they can read the screen through the lower portion of their glasses. This can sometimes lead to neck, shoulder, and back discomfort. Potential solutions include either lowering your computer monitor or purchasing glasses designed specifically for working at the computer.</p> <p>Position the monitor at a 90-degree angle to windows or other bright light sources to minimize glare and reflections. Adjust the monitor tilt so that ceiling lights do not reflect on your screen.</p> <p>If you use papers a lot, put them in a document holder that is placed next to the monitor. There are document holders that will handle all sizes and weights of documents.</p> <p>Adjust the monitor height so that the top of the screen is at or slightly below eye level. Your eyes should look slightly downward when viewing the middle of the screen. Position your monitor so that it is approximately an arm length away. If you have trouble seeing the monitor check for glare, check the monitor, or have your eyes checked by an optometrist.</p> <p>Rest your eyes periodically by focusing on an object at least 20 feet away. Blink often. Clean your monitor regularly. Use a lint-free, non-abrasive cloth and a non-alcohol, neutral, non-abrasive cleaning solution or glass cleaner to minimize dust.</p>
Chair has adjustable height and				Your chair should be adjustable and

	Y	N	NA	COMMENTS
seat back				<p>stable. Vary your posture in the chair throughout the day. Some people like to switch, during the day, from sitting to standing to promote posture changes.</p> <p>Adjust the height of the chair so that your feet are firmly on the floor but not so low that your weight is not evenly distributed over the full seat surface. Only use a footrest when attempts to adjust your chair and the rest of the workstation fail to keep your feet on the ground. If you use a footrest, use a large and solid one. Be sure that you have enough space between the top of your thighs and the underside of your workstation.</p> <p>Extend your lower legs slightly forward so that the angle between your thighs and lower legs is 90 degrees or more.</p> <p>Keep your body in a relaxed yet upright position. The backrest of your chair should support the inward curve of your lower back. Use the entire seat and backrest to support your body. Adjust the backrest slightly backwards. If the chair back is adjustable forward and backward, adjust the angle to what is comfortable for you. The angle you prefer is rather subjective; you should adjust the back angle of your chair so your trunk and upper legs form an angle somewhere between 94 -115 degrees.</p> <p>The angle formed by your thighs and back should be 90 degrees or more.</p> <p>If your chair has arms they should not interfere with you getting close to your work. In addition, when you assume the typing position with your arms resting comfortably at your side, the chair arms should be at a height where they just</p>

	Y	N	NA	COMMENTS
				barely contact your elbows. The chair arms should not noticeably elevate your shoulders or force you to wing your arms out to use them. The arm supports should support the forearms comfortably while typing. Adjust the height of the armrests or forearm supports so that when your arms are resting on them your shoulders can relax.
Seat back is adjusted to support lumbar region of back				While seated, the lower back should be supported for maximum comfort and to minimize back strain and fatigue.
Use an appropriate wrist rest and use it properly.				A padded wrist rest made out of firm foam will take some of the load off your neck, shoulder, and back muscles; keep your wrist in a straight and neutral position while typing; and keep your arms off the sharp edges of the work surface. Ideally the wrist rest should be made of firm foam and constructed so the pad height matches the front (toe) height of your keyboard. Use a wrist pad only to rest your wrists between typing. Avoid resting your wrist on sharp edges. Avoid twisting your wrists sideways to press hard-to-reach keys. Instead, move your whole arm.
Document holders are used to position documents close to monitors				Placing the document at the same level and distance as the monitor screen can minimize eye, neck and shoulder strain. The document holder will help in keeping your head over your spine and can prevent or relieve neck, shoulder, and back discomfort.
C. Glare Reduction				
Screen contrast and brightness are adjusted				
Screen is positioned away from or at right angles to windows				Daylight can cause annoying glare if windows are behind the monitor or behind the operator.

	Y	N	NA	COMMENTS
Screen is tilted down slightly to reduce glare from overhead lighting				Overhead lighting can also reflect off the screen if the monitor is tilted up too far.
Lamps and other lighting are positioned to minimize glare				Sometimes just moving a lamp can eliminate a source of glare.
Window coverings are adjusted to reduce glare from outside light				
D. Other				
Vary your tasks throughout your day.				Build in short tasks that force you to stand up and walk away from the computer. Repetitious static work (working at a computer) is very fatiguing on your upper extremities as well as your eyes. Examples are: retrieving printouts, do filing, or get other work. These tasks should involve walking, standing, and stretching.
Take frequent breaks.				<p>Your body needs periodic breaks to rest and recover. Taking a break does not mean you have to stop working, you could make a trip to the copier, talk to a colleague, make some phone calls, etc.</p> <p>Take these brief breaks every 20 to 30 minutes. Frequent short breaks may be of greater value than fewer, longer breaks.</p> <p>During these breaks, stretch muscles and joints that were in one position for an extended period of time. Relax muscles and joints that were active.</p> <p>Use a timer or reminder software to remind you to take breaks.</p>

It is often working overtime and the stress of deadline situations that force people to ignore and work through their pain and discomfort. It is very important that once you start to notice some pain or discomfort to be very careful. Pain that goes away over night is usually a sign of fatigue, pain that is continuous and does not go away over night is more serious and should be attended to immediately. Once you detect any pain or

discomfort while working see a healthcare professional at your site as soon as possible. It is much easier for them to treat you and for you to recover from a pain episode the earlier you are treated. Ignoring pain can lead to serious injury.

Finally be careful with what you do outside of work. Repetitive stressful activities outside of work (e.g. home improvement projects, hobbies that require repetitive motion, etc.) can sometimes lead to repetitive motion injuries as well. When working on a new task you should treat it just like preparing for a race. Whenever you engage in a new task gradually build up your strength and endurance, don't just jump right in.

For desk exercises that can help ease the stress of a long day at the computer go to the following [Intelihealth link](#).