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Office ergonomics: Self assessment worksheet

NAME: _____ DEPARTMENT: _____ DATE: _____

NEUTRAL POSTURES

To set up a workstation for optimal comfort and performance, it's helpful to understand the concept of neutral body posture. Neutral body posture is a comfortable working position in which your joints are naturally aligned. Working with the body in a neutral position reduces stress and strain on the muscles, tendons, nerves and joints - which can reduce your risk of developing a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD). After watching the Workstation Comfort video series, use this checklist to review key areas of your workstation. Discuss your completed worksheet with your supervisor or manager to determine the best solutions for your workplace.



CHAIR *Is your chair properly adjusted?*

Yes No

Adjust your seat height so that your feet are positioned flat on the floor and fully supported.

Your knees should be at the same height as your hips.

Thighs and hips should be parallel to the floor or angled slightly down.

The lumbar support should make contact with the small curve in your lower back.

Hands, wrists and forearms should be straight, in-line and roughly parallel to the floor.

Place shoulders in a relaxed position with upper arms hanging at the side of the body.

Make sure that you maintain a distance of one to two inches (or two finger widths) between the front edge of the seat pan and the backside of your knees. If the seat pan is too deep, you may need a lumbar wedge or pillow.

Verify that the seat pan width is adequate by making sure that there are 1-2 inches (or two finger widths) of space between the thigh and the chair edge.



KEYBOARD *Is your keyboard properly positioned?*

Place the keyboard in a flat position directly in front of and aligned with the monitor.

Check to make sure the legs on the underside of the keyboard remain in a flat position.

Your keyboard should be positioned at a height that allows your wrists to be in a straight line with your arms.

Your elbows should rest comfortably at your sides and be at about a 90 degree angle.

Once the height is adjusted, make sure the keyboard tray is level or in a downward tilt. This also helps your wrists stay straight and in line with your forearms.

If you are not using a keyboard tray, you may need to adjust your chair and/or desk height in order to work in a neutral posture.

Use a soft palm rest to minimize contact pressure with hard surfaces on the desk. It is important to use these pads for periodic "micro breaks" and not as a means of support while typing.



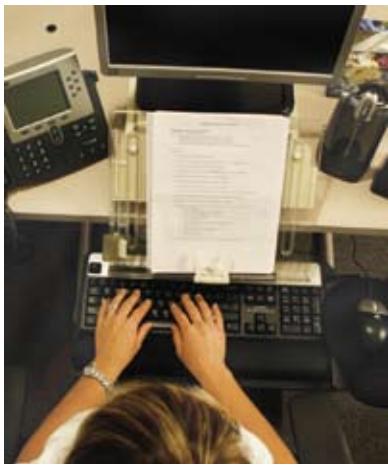
MOUSE *Is your mouse properly positioned?*

The mouse should be placed at the same level as and in close proximity to the keyboard.

Use a mouse that fits your hand comfortably and keeps your fingers relaxed and slightly curved.

A wrist rest or mouse pad will allow your wrist to rest on a soft surface and help avoid contact pressure.

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MONITOR *Is your monitor properly positioned?*

Yes No

Position the monitor directly in front of you and square it with the keyboard.

Ensure that your monitor is placed at a comfortable distance for viewing. Keep in mind that placing the monitor too far back might promote you to sit on the edge of your seat to compensate for the distance.

The top 1/3 of the monitor screen should be at eye level. This minimizes neck strain while working.

If you wear bifocal, trifocal, or progressive lenses you may need to lower the monitor to avoid tilting your head back while viewing.

Use a document holder to help you scan between the document and the screen. This may include a holder that is at the same height as your monitor or a slant board that is placed between the keyboard and monitor.

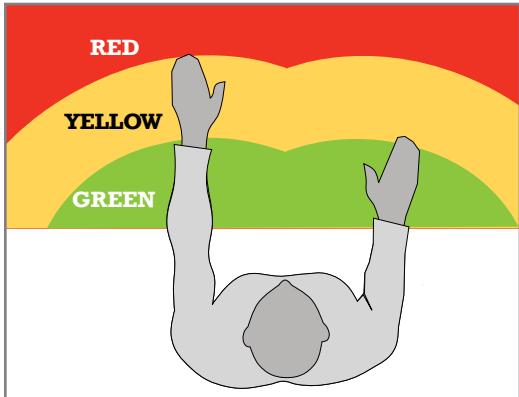


PHONE *Is your phone properly positioned?*

Position the phone close to your workstation to avoid extended reaching while dialing and/or answering calls.

If you use the phone for extended periods of time, consider using a headset or your speaker phone. Using this equipment can help you avoid awkward postures such as holding the phone between your head and shoulder.

Headsets also make it easier to handle documents or use the computer while on the phone.



WORKSTATION LAYOUT

Now that the main components in your work area have been arranged, let's focus on the proper positioning of the peripheral items:

Frequently used objects should be located up close in the "green" zone.

Objects that are used less often can be placed in the midrange area, the "yellow" zone.

Seldom used objects can be placed in the "red" zone. Move them into the "green" or "yellow" zone when you need to handle them.

Use storage areas such as overhead shelves, filing cabinets, and desk drawers for items that you use infrequently. Avoid storing items under your desk, which can take up leg space or strain your back when you retrieve them.

BEST PRACTICES

For additional workstation comfort consider the following best practices

Use filtered lighting for glare reduction or use task lighting when needed to avoid eye strain.

Keep peripheral items within a close reaching distance.

Alternate job tasks throughout your work day. This will reduce fatigue and allow a different set of muscles to be used with different postures.

Take periodic breaks, to rest and reenergize. Micro-breaks, 30-60 second short breaks, are recommended every 20-30 minutes for computer users.

This will allow you to do some quick stretches and simple eye exercises to reduce eye strain.

Remember to apply the same ergonomic principles in other work areas – while telecommuting, using a lap-top, or at a standing workstation.