

ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY?

OFFICE ERGONOMICS

Adjusting and Adapting Your Computer Workstation

A well-designed workspace allows you to work comfortably without needing to over-reach for your keyboard, mouse etc., sit or stand too long, or use prolonged and repetitive awkward postures. The goal at any seated workstation is to organize tasks and arrange the workstation so that you can maintain comfortable upright postures, with your elbows fairly close to the body, for most of your work time.

No matter your sitting posture, it will not feel comfortable if you maintain it for too long. Your workstation, chair and the way you have arranged your work area should allow you to easily alter your position. Movement is important for minimizing fatigue and can be as simple as slightly altering the angles of your neck, shoulders, elbows, wrists, hips, knees and ankles.



Awkward Postures

- Awkward postures deviate from neutral or comfortable positions.
- They may occur repetitively, such as repetitive reaching (awkward for the shoulder), or be sustained, such as holding the neck in a bent or forward (poked-out) posture.
- The further a body part is from its neutral alignment, the more awkward the posture.

Work Organization

Even the most comfortable posture should be changed periodically.

- Tilt your chair seat and backrest to vary posture;
- Take short breaks frequently to avoid prolonged static postures; go for a quick walk around the office and complete an errand, or fill your water bottle;
- Alternate work at the computer with non-computer tasks;
- Adopt a work pace that is regular and reasonable for you;
- Periodically look away from the screen to a farther distance;
- Stretch regularly and perform relaxation exercises;
- Swivel your chair to face your next task instead of twisting your body.

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1 Your monitor should be at a comfortable reading distance and height

- Position your monitor, keyboard and chair to be (in a straight line) aligned with your body.
- The viewing distance should be approximately one arm's length away.
- The monitor height should allow your neck to be in a neutral (relaxed) position when looking at the top row of text on the screen. You should be able to look down comfortably at approximately a 35-degree angle.
- Avoid glare by positioning your monitor away from windows and direct lights.
- Keep written work materials propped up near your monitor screen.
- If you wear bifocals and view the screen with the lower portion of the lenses, it may help to position the monitor lower or tilt it back slightly.

2 Your lower and mid-back should be well supported

- Adjust the height, tension and angle of your backrest. The lumbar support should be positioned at your waist so that it fits the hollow of your back.

3 Your elbows should be at approximately the same height as the keyboard

- Adjust chair height so your elbows are about the same height as the work surface.
- Keep your upper and lower arms at a 90-degree angle to each other while typing.
- Position your mouse as closely to your keyboard as possible to minimize reaching and twisting.

4 Your forearms should be supported and your shoulders relaxed at all times

- The height of — and distance between — your armrests should allow freedom of movement for your forearms when performing tasks, yet provide support for them during rest periods.
- Avoid hunching your shoulders and ensure that your elbows/upper arms remain close to your torso. Keep your shoulders dropped and relaxed.

5 Your wrists should be straight at all times and your hands in line with your forearms

- Adjust the angle and height of your keyboard tray or work surface to ensure straight wrists.
- If your keyboard tray or work surface is not adjustable, adjust your seat to ensure straight wrists. You will need to use a footrest if you have raised the seat and your feet are not flat and well supported on the floor.
- The purpose of a hand/wrist support is to prevent your wrists from resting on hard surfaces during rest periods between keyboard tasks.
- Good habits include avoiding extreme wrist postures. Avoid bending your wrists.

6 Workspace reaches

- Place your mouse directly beside your keyboard and at the same height. Avoid positioning your mouse on a different work-surface level from your keyboard.
- Document(s) should be on a document holder that is placed either between the keyboard and the screen or next to — and at approximately the same height as — the monitor screen.

7 Your thighs should be parallel to the floor

- Adjust the height and/or angle of your chair seat.

8 The back of your knees should be clear of the front edge of the seat

- Adjust the depth of your chair seat so that you can easily place at least two to three fingers behind your knee.

9 Your feet should lay flat on the floor or on a footrest

- Adjust the height of your chair seat.
- Plant feet firmly on floor or use a footrest.

