

# Office Ergonomics

Ergonomics is about creating a safe and efficient environment for people. By adapting the environment or equipment, people can perform tasks more effectively and safely, whilst preventing injury.

## Varying position and stretching to prevent injuries

- Ergonomic principles encourage variety and movement rather than exact postures in daily activities. Whether at work or home, it is important to vary body positions and stretch regularly to relax and strengthen muscles that are repeatedly used.
- Eye strain can be reduced by periodically looking away from the monitor.
- Taking breaks to stretch can help muscles that have been overused to recover, for example side-to-side neck stretches or shoulder rolls.
- Change position every twenty or thirty minutes to assist circulation and relieve muscle tension.
- Applying these principles can help avoid injuries from repetitive motions, muscle overuse and static sitting. They also assist in preventing eye strain, headache and fatigue resulting from improper posture and positioning.



## Safe sitting

- Optimal seating is with an angle between 90-100 degrees at the hips, knees and feet. Your thighs should be parallel to the floor with feet flat on a supported surface.
- There should be a space between the edge of the seat and the back of the knees. A rounded seat edge will avoid cutting circulation to the thighs.
- The lumbar curve of your lower spine should be supported by the chair.
- Shoulders should be relaxed, elbows at right angles and wrists in a neutral position. Forearms should be supported.
- Adjustable chairs, desks and footstools can be used to encourage correct sitting postures.



## Safe workstation setup monitor

A computer monitor should be placed directly in front of you, about an arm's length away and tilted back slightly. This will help keep your head centred over your spinal column and reduce tension in the neck, shoulders and back.

## Lighting

Prevent computer glare by adjusting screen brightness, nearby lighting or repositioning monitor. Monitors should be placed perpendicular to windows to eliminate glare. If that is not possible, shades can be drawn. Consider a screen filter to reduce glare.

## Keyboard

- Your arms should be relaxed whilst working with elbows at a right angle and wrists neutral.
- A keyboard tray that slides can assist in maintaining a correct ergonomic position.
- Split keyboards can adjust to the user's comfortable working position and encourage relaxation of the shoulders, wrists and hands.
- Whilst typing keep your arms off your arm rests, and your wrists off your wrist support. A wrist rest is designed to protect the arms and wrists from coming into contact with a sharp leading edge of a work surface. Unfortunately, many people use both of these items as supports to lean on, but they can reduce the body's ability to absorb shock, increase muscle tension and reduce blood flow in and out of the hands.



## Mouse

A mouse should be positioned within easy reach. The mouse should fit the user's hand. Trackballs may reduce pain related to excess shoulder movement, but at the same time put more strain on the fingers.

Alternative mouse options are touch pads, vertical mouse, joysticks, head-controlled mouse, infrared hands-free mouse, pen tablet or a foot operated mouse.



Trackball



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**For more information, please contact**

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