

Ergonomic Solutions

Ergonomic Solutions for the Computer User

Office ergonomics has become extremely important mainly due to increased use of computers. Even though the advent of the computer has made office work more efficient, the lack of varied movements associated with computer work can contribute to muscular discomfort, which can turn into a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD), such as carpal tunnel syndrome, tension neck syndrome or tennis elbow, if ergonomics is ignored.

To minimize strain while working at the computer, workstations should be set up in an "ergonomically friendly" way. Here are a few tips:

1. Purchase a good workstation chair and adjust it properly

The chair is the most important component of a computer workstation. An ideal "ergonomic" chair should be adjustable and provide lower lumbar back support. Employees should adjust their chairs regularly to promote blood flow.

2. Minimize repetitive reaching

Keep items that you use frequently within easy reach.

3. Maintain a proper working height

Keyboards should be located at elbow height, feet should be flat on the floor or supported on a foot rest and shoulders should be relaxed.

4. Type with straight wrist joints

While keyboarding wrists should be straight. This may mean lowering the legs on the back of the keyboard or tilting the keyboard slightly backwards. Split keyboards can minimize wrist deviations. A wrist rest can help maintain straight wrists, however are not meant for to lean on while typing.

5. Avoid forceful gripping of the mouse:

Let go of the mouse when you are not using it. Move your arm rather than your wrists when mousing.

6. Stretch and be active

Frequently stop (i.e., at least once per hour) entering data to stretch hands and fingers. Stand up for five minutes, at least once every hour.

It is important to remember workstation changes may feel uncomfortable at first. Be sure employees give themselves time to adjust.

