

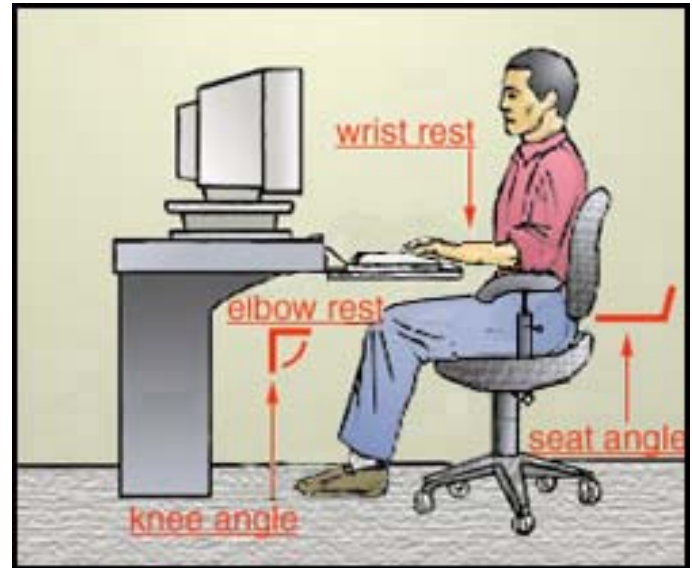
Do you ever leave work

with headaches, back aches, sore shoulders, painful wrists, or a stiff neck? These are frequent complaints of employees who may be suffering from ergonomic-related injuries and illnesses.

The good news is:

It doesn't have to be that way!

By using the principles of ergonomics, (the science of fitting the workplace to the worker instead of forcing the worker to fit the workplace) you can adjust your workstation to fit your body....and avoid the stresses that cause so much pain and discomfort.



Workstation Checklist

To make your computer workstation more ergonomically friendly, try these!

Pay Attention to Posture

- Don't lean forward! If you find yourself leaning forward to see the monitor or reach the keyboard, move **them** closer to you. Leaning forward can be very hard on your back, neck, and shoulders.
- Wrists should be in a neutral angle (see back). Use wrist supports if they are comfortable.
- Don't twist your neck. Place your monitor so that you face it squarely, without twisting.

Adjust Your Chair

- Adjust the height of your chair so that your thighs aren't pressing uncomfortably against the edge, and your hands and arms are positioned at the keyboard with wrists in a neutral position.
- Adjust the backrest so that it provides support for your lower back. You can try using a pillow if your chair is not adjustable.

Adjust Your Monitor

- Position the monitor at a distance that is comfortable for you to see clearly without straining.
 - Adjust the height so that the first line of text is just slightly below eye level.
- Position the screen to minimize glare. If you can see a bright light source reflected in your screen, try to move or adjust the monitor so that you no longer see it.
- Set the contrast and brightness of the screen to a comfortable level.
 - Dust your screen frequently!

Use a Document Holder

- Use a document holder that is close to the screen and at the same eye level and distance, if possible.

You want your workstation to be as comfortable as possible. If you're happy with your monitor being far away, and you're not having headaches or any other problems... Leave it there!

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS (MSDs)

What are MSDs?

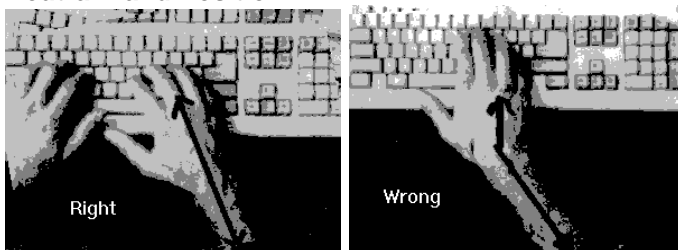
MSDs are injuries and illnesses that affect muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints or spinal discs. Your doctor might tell you that you have one of the following common MSDs.

- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Rotator cuff syndrome
- De Quervain's disease
- Trigger finger
- Sciatica
- Epicondylitis
- Tendinitis
- Raynaud's phenomenon
- Carpet layer's knee
- Herniated spinal disc
- Low back pain
- Hand-arm Vibration Syndrome
- Tension neck syndrome

Conditions that may lead to MSDs are:

- **Repetition** – such as long or concentrated hours of typing or using a mouse.
- **Awkward Positions** – Awkward postures include repeated or prolonged reaching, twisting, bending, kneeling, squatting, working overhead with your hands or arms, or holding fixed positions.
- **Forceful Exertions** – Force is the amount of physical effort required to perform a task (such as heavy lifting) or to maintain control of equipment or tools.
- **Contact Stress** – Pressing the body against a hard or sharp edge can result in placing too much pressure on nerves, tendons and blood vessels.
- **Vibration** – Operating vibrating tools such as sanders, grinders, chippers, routers, drills and other saws can lead to nerve damage.

Neutral Hand Position



Symptoms of MSDs:

Workers suffering from MSDs may experience less strength of gripping, less range-of-motion, loss of muscle function and inability to do everyday tasks. Common symptoms include:

- Painful joints
- Pain in wrists, shoulders, forearms, knees
- Pain, tingling or numbness in hands or feet
- Fingers or toes turning white
- Shooting or stabbing pains in arms or legs
- Back or neck pain
- Swelling or inflammation
- Stiffness
- Burning sensation
- Loss of strength or coordination in the hands
- Numbness or discomfort in the hands that wakes you up at night

Please see a doctor if you are experiencing any of these symptoms!

Other Resources:

Marneth Weaver, 744-7418, Physical Plant A&E Services – Furniture recommendations.

Greg Hogan, 744-7241, OSU EHS – Workstation ergonomic audits by appointment.

Need more information?

Feel free to call OSU Environmental Health & Safety at 744-7241, or check out our award-winning web pages at:

<http://ehs.okstate.edu/index.htm>

For direct links to sites with ergonomics information and articles, try:

<http://ehs.okstate.edu/ergonmics.htm>

Also:

The Typing Injury FAQ: <http://www.tifaq.org/>