

ERGONOMICS CHECKLIST

You should be able to answer "yes" to all of the following questions:

- Do you have enough room on your work surface for all of your computer accessories?
- Are your most frequently accessed items, such as your phone, manuals and notepads, easy to reach?
- Have you removed all under-desk obstructions?
- Do you avoid resting your arms on sharp or square edges while working?
- If your feet do not rest flat on the floor when your chair is properly adjusted, do you use a footrest?
- Do the armrests on your chair allow you to easily get close to your work?
- Is your monitor screen clean?
- Is your mouse or trackball positioned next to your keyboard?
- Do you frequently change body positions while working?
- Are you free from experiencing any pain or discomfort while working?

Periodically review this checklist to help keep your work space ergonomically friendly. And remember, an ergonomic work environment helps reduce stress and the potential for injuries and disorders associated with muscle overuse, bad posture and repeated tasks.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



When Your Car Is Your Workstation

If you spend most of your workday in a vehicle, then you need to think about safety and ergonomics. In addition to the risk of driving distractions, you can encounter the same ergonomic problems in a car as you can in your workplace. Check out these ergonomic basics:

- **Adopt good posture** while driving. Poor posture can lead to degeneration and wear and tear of the spine, which can lead to back injury.
- **Try to shift positions regularly** while driving and take frequent breaks if driving long distances.
- **Sit in a fairly upright position** while driving. You should be able to reach the gas and brake without stretching. If possible, the back of your seat should be tilted at a 110-degree angle from your legs, to reduce disc pressure and relax the back.
- **Make sure your vehicle is right for you.** An ergonomically correct vehicle should have a seat with independent height and tilt adjustment and lumbar support, and a tilt steering wheel.

Workstation Ergonomics



Ergonomics for Everyone

Hairdressers, athletes, construction workers, delivery people ... no one is immune from stress and strain on the body. An ergonomic work environment can help you feel better, work more efficiently and avoid injury, no matter what your job. Here are some helpful hints:

Use the right tools and keep them in working order. Tools that are in good repair and right for the job reduce strain on muscles and joints.

Listen to your body. If you feel pain, numbness, stiffness or soreness in any body part, take it as a sign to adjust your work environment to make it more ergonomically correct.

Exercise regularly. Keeping your body in shape makes you more resistant to work-related injury.

Regulate temperature when possible. Being too cold puts extra stress on muscles and joints. If you can't control the temperature of your workplace, wear layered clothing, so you stay comfortable.

Check your posture. Allow your spine to be in a natural position as you work — don't sit or stand stiffly straight or slouch. Keep your chin level, so your head isn't tilting up or down for long periods of time while working.

The goal: No matter what your workplace, arrange it so you feel comfortable, and you don't have to reach, strain or struggle.

Ergonomics: the scientific study of how work affects the body

Fitting Your Workstation to You

If you work at a computer, your body pays the price for a poor workstation setup. But you don't need a consultant to help you achieve an "ergonomically correct workplace." You can make many changes easily yourself and at no cost to your employer. **Try these tips:**

CHAIR: Adjust your chair's height so your feet rest flat on the floor, and pressure is off the backs of your thighs. Try to find a chair that is firm and supportive. **Easy fix:** If your chair does not have good lower back support, place a small cushion behind the small of your back.

KEYBOARD and MOUSE: Your keyboard and mouse should be 1-2 inches from your thighs, so your elbows and wrists are in a straight line as you work. If necessary, attach a sliding keyboard tray underneath your desk. **Note:** Don't pound the keyboard. A light touch prevents extra wear and tear on wrists and hands.

MONITOR: Position your monitor in front of you, so you don't have to twist your neck to look at it. Be sure it is no more than an arm's length away, and the top of the screen is at eye level.

More tips: Keep your monitor screen clean to avoid eyestrain ... clear the area under your desk to provide room for your legs to stretch ... use a footrest if your feet don't reach the floor.



Here's what you can do to prevent CVS:

- Set your computer screen 20-26 inches away from your eyes and about 20 degrees below eye level.
- Keep your document holder close to the screen.
- Dim overhead lights and keep desk lamps low and adjusted, so there is no glare on the screen (you can also get an anti-reflective filter for your screen).
- Take a break by taking your eyes off the screen every 15 minutes and focusing on distant objects to relax eye muscles.
- Blink frequently.

Illustration: Courtesy, Susan E. Lamb

RING, RING

If you spend a significant amount of time on the phone, use a headset. You'll avoid awkward neck positions and repeated reaching for the phone.

How to Counter Computer Vision Syndrome

Studies show that nearly 60 million people suffer from eye or vision problems due to computer work.

The American Optometric Association (AOA) reports that approximately 14 percent of patients schedule eye exams because of what is now known as computer vision syndrome (CVS).

What is it?

CVS is defined by the AOA as "the complex of eye and vision problems ... which are experienced during or related to computer use."

Symptoms include:

- Eyestrain
- Blurred near or distance vision
- Headaches
- Dry or irritated eyes (red eyes)
- Neck and/or backaches
- Light sensitivity
- Double vision
- Fatigue