

Computers affect every part of our lives. People use computers at work, in coffee shops and at home. It has been estimated that 75 percent of all jobs require the use of a computer. It is estimated that 30 percent of office productivity is lost due to discomfort and stress employees experience in the workplace. With the amount of time the average worker spends using the computer, cases of cumulative trauma disorders (CTD) have greatly increased. The good news is that these injuries may be reduced or prevented by a proactive ergonomics program.

Proper Posture

A good chair will allow for the following adjustments: chair height, seat back angle and height, seat pan depth and armrests. The following adjustments should be considered:

- Operator's feet are firmly on the floor when sitting back in chair.
- 90°-110° angle in knees, hips and elbows.
- There should be a few inches of space between edge of seat and knees.
- Lumbar support should fit into the small of your back.
- Arms should be relaxed and forearms parallel with floor.
- If work surface is too high: raise chair, lower workstation or add a footrest.

Equipment

Other equipment that can help proper posture includes:

- Keyboard trays, alternative keyboards and mice—fingers should be relaxed on keyboard and wrists should be straight.
- Monitor risers—top of monitor should be at eye level. If user has bifocals, adjust so the user does not have to bend the neck.



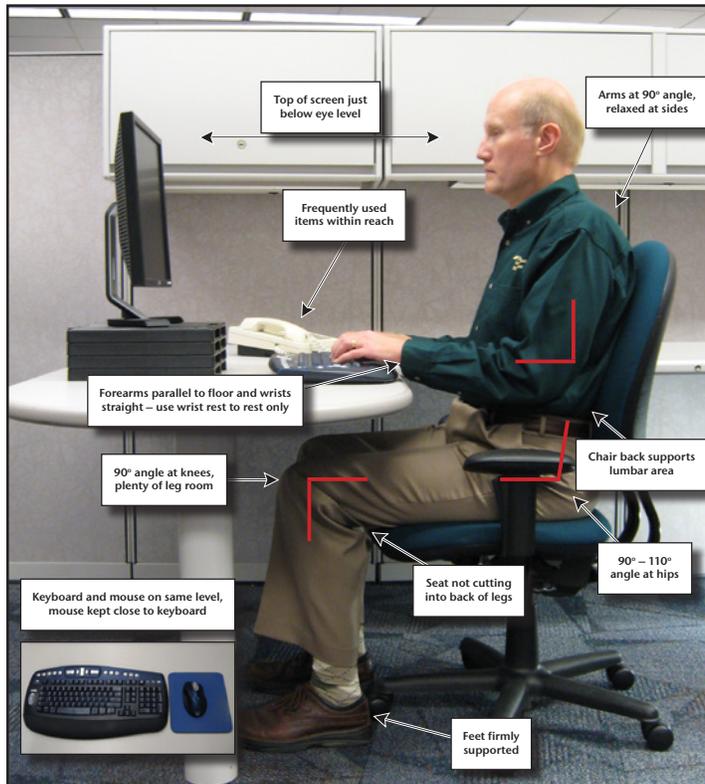
It is good to experiment before purchasing ergonomic equipment. For example, old phonebooks can be used as a monitor riser or footrest. Also, most office equipment dealers will provide samples in order to gain your business.

Stretching

To help prevent discomfort from sitting at a desk or keyboard for most of the day, consider stretching and relaxation exercises. Stretching can and should be done frequently throughout the day to relax muscles, improve circulation and decrease the effects of overuse and repetitive motion. Most stretches can be done at the workstation without drawing attention to the operator. If you experience pain or discomfort with any stretching program, stop the stretching and consult a physician.

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Office Worker Neutral Posture



For Additional Information

Occupational Safety & Health Administration:

www.osha.gov

- Safety and Health Topics: Ergonomics

National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health:

www.cdc.gov/niosh

- Ergonomics programs

EMC Insurance Companies: www.emcins.com

- Online Training: Office Workstation Layout
- Safety Tools and Resources