

Movement

One of the best things you can do to prevent MSDs is to avoid remaining in the same position for long periods of time. Moving around throughout your day is very important.

- Try to break up tasks so that you can change position more frequently.
- Walk over to talk to a coworker instead of calling or emailing them.
- Go and get some water, this is great for your body and will give you a short moving break.
- If you notice you've been sitting for a long time, stand up and stretch a little.
- Try a break reminder clock, there are several available for free on the internet. Look around for one that will work on your computer platform.



Don't forget your eyes. People tend to blink less often when using a computer. This can lead to dry eyes and headaches.

- Take a short pause to blink, close your eyes or focus on an object that is far away.

Sit/Stand Workstations

A lot of people are getting workstations that will allow them to stand up while using their computer. These workstations are wonderful for individuals who are seated for four or more hours a day. They allow for greater position changes throughout the day, which allows different muscle groups to be active or relaxed. Also long stretches of sitting is known to increase your likelihood of developing MSDs as well as heart problems and other diseases.

However, it is important to slowly increase the amount of standing you do in your day.

Start off with standing for short periods, 15 minutes, once or twice a day. Slowly increase the amount of time spent standing to decrease the likelihood of straining muscles you aren't used to using.

Ergonomic Evaluations

Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) is available to perform ergonomic evaluations of your work space. Ergonomic evaluations involve going over your work duties and your work space to arrange your area so you are as comfortable as possible while working. If you need help with your workspace, submit an EH&S Service Request Form to request an ergonomic evaluation.

Environmental Health & Safety
002 Martin Hall, Cheney, WA 99004
P: 509.359.6496 | F: 509.359.4690
sites.ewu.edu/ehs

COMPUTER WORKSTATION ERGONOMICS



Environmental Health and Safety



When you are working at a computer it is important to avoid awkward postures and to position your body comfortably. Not only can this improve your overall productivity, it may help you to avoid musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). Changing your posture slightly during extended tasks will help you to avoid discomfort and fatigue.

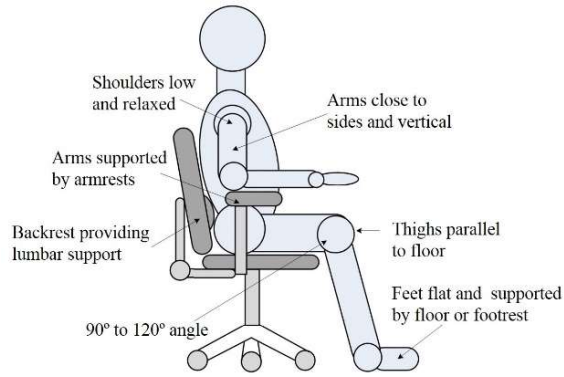
When working at the computer, adapt your surroundings and arrange your equipment to promote a comfortable and relaxed body posture. Every person is different so each ergonomic workspace will be slightly different. The following suggestions will help provide you with a more comfortable work environment.

An ergonomically adapted workstation will:

- Support your back and maintain its natural curve.
- Keep your thighs parallel to the floor and provide comfortable support for your legs.
- Allow your feet to rest in front of you, flat on the floor, or on a footrest.
- Keep your elbows near your sides and your shoulders relaxed.
- Keep your wrists flat and straight while typing and using the mouse.
- Position your monitor(s) so that you can keep your head pointed forward and you don't need to move your head to see the screen(s)
- Provide appropriate lighting for your work.
- Keep objects you use frequently close to you.

Office Chair

Your chair should provide you with proper support.



- Make sure your chair supports your back and provides lumbar support.
- Sit up straight or lean slightly back to allow your chair to support your back.
- Remember to keep your shoulders and neck relaxed.
- Clear away items from under your desk to allow for comfortable leg positioning and movement.
- Use a footrest if your feet do not rest flat on the floor.
- Make sure the seat doesn't press into the back of your legs. Either adjust the seat depth, if possible, or use a footrest to hold your feet farther in front of you.

Change your chair height or the angle of the seatback occasionally throughout your day. This will help prevent muscle fatigue and strain associated with remaining in one position for too long.

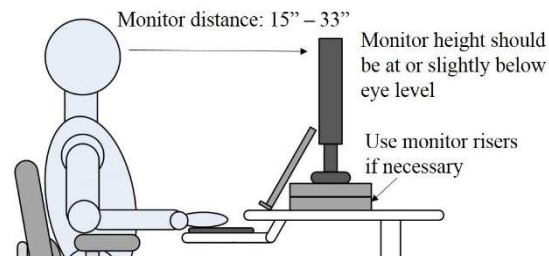
Monitor(s)

Improperly placed monitors can cause you to work in awkward positions. The result can be neck, shoulder, and/or back pain as well as eye irritation, blurry vision, dry eyes and/or headaches. The position of the monitor and its distance from you are both important considerations when setting up your monitor.

For distance, the monitor should be about an arm's length away from you.

Monitor positioning has more factors to consider. Monitors should be positioned so that:

- The top of the monitor is at or below eye level.
- Bifocal users may need their screen even lower based on their reading area.
- There is no glare on the screen from windows or lights.
- The monitor is straight in front of you.



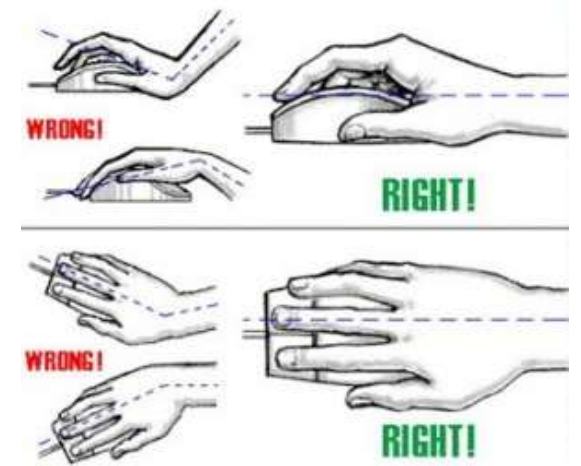
Adjust your monitor settings to allow for comfortable viewing. The contrast and/or brightness can be changed, as can the screen font sizes.

Don't forget to clean off your screen occasionally, dust can cause blurring.

Keyboard and Mouse

Improper height, angle, and positioning of your keyboard and mouse can cause you to bend your wrists at awkward angles. These awkward angles can lead to wrist and forearm pain and possibly contribute to carpal tunnel syndrome or tendonitis.

- The keyboard and mouse should be positioned directly in front of you, on a stable surface.
- The keyboard and mouse should both be at the same height.
- The height of the keyboard and mouse should keep your forearms parallel to the floor and allow you to keep your wrists flat.
- Use a soft touch when striking the keys.
- Keep your hands and fingers as relaxed as possible.
- When using your keyboard and mouse, try to keep your wrists as flat and straight as possible to reduce awkward angles.



Telephone Use

If your job requires frequent telephone conversations, stay aware of your body position while using the phone.

- Never cradle the telephone with your shoulder. If you have a telephone cradle on your phone you should remove it.
- If you need to talk on the phone and work on the computer at the same time, use speakerphone or get a telephone headset.
- If your conversation does not require writing or typing, consider using the conversation as an opportunity to lean back in your chair. This will allow your back muscles to relax more and will prevent stiffness associated with maintaining a static position for too long.