25 Ergonomic Tips for Computer Users

Picture Sources – The Verge

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Working for extended durations at a computer can be harmful and increase risk for injury. However, by setting up the workstation appropriately, comfort and safety can be improved.

POSTURE AND POSITIONING ARE IMPORTANT

1. Maintain good posture when working at the keyboard. The natural curves of your spine should be maintained with the use of a chair with back support. It is important to sit properly in your chair while you work. No one sits in the proper posture at all times, but sitting properly will drastically reduce your injury risk. Movement while seated is also important. Humans are not meant to sit at a computer all day, however, with the right chair, effective and efficient movement can be incorporated without compromising posture and increasing risk. Also, sit back in the chair!
2. Keep your feet supported either on the floor or on a footrest when you work to reduce pressure on your lower back.
3. Avoid twisting or bending your neck or back when working. Frequently used items (source documents and paperwork) should be positioned directly in front of you and angled upward on a copy holder/document holder when working.
4. Keep your shoulders relaxed with your elbows close to your sides at 90-degree angles when working.
5. Avoid resting your forearms or elbows on the hard surface or edge of your table/desk.
6. Elbows should be positioned at approximately ~90-110 degrees angles when working in order to keep a relaxed position at the keyboard. A properly adjustable table is the most ideal solution.
7. Consider a height adjustable keyboard tray (if a height adjustable table cannot be implemented). These can be beneficial and will allow easy height adjustment of the keyboard and the mouse. Keyboard trays should allow for a straight wrist position.

8. Maintain a neutral or straight wrist position when keying or using a mouse. Wrist rests can assist you in maintaining a neutral position when used properly during pauses. Float your arms above the keyboard and wrist rest when keying while maintaining a straight wrist. Avoid planting your wrists on the table or wrist rest. This can result in bending the wrists either up and down or side to side.

YOUR WORK PACE

9. Work at a reasonable pace.
10. Take frequent rest breaks during the day. These breaks can be brief and should include stretches for optimal results. If possible, take a 1 or 2 minute break every 30-45 minutes. Take a 5-10 minute break every hour. Try to get up, move around and do an alternative activity every one to two hours.

YOUR WORK TECHNIQUE

10. Reduce the number of repetitive motions you complete when working. Keystrokes can be reduced with the use of macros or software programs allowing "sticky keys." Use of scroll locks and keystroke combinations can reduce pointing device movements.
11. Alternate tasks to make changes in your working position to avoid making the same movements for prolonged periods of time.
12. Keep your fingers and knuckles relaxed when working at the keyboard.
13. Never hold a pen or pencil in your hand when keying.
14. Avoid hitting the keyboard with excessive force.
15. Avoid holding your pointing device tightly. Your hands and fingers should be relaxed.
16. Rest your eyes by refocusing on distant objects intermittently when working.

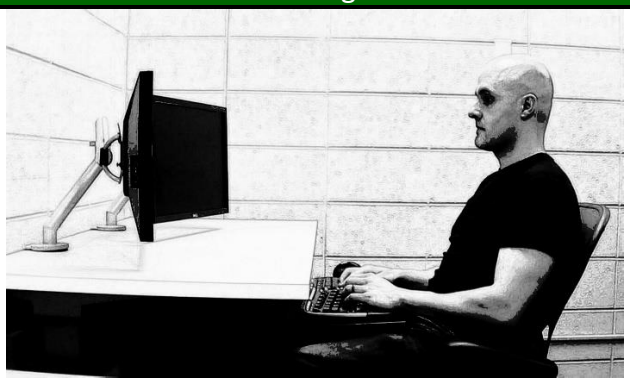
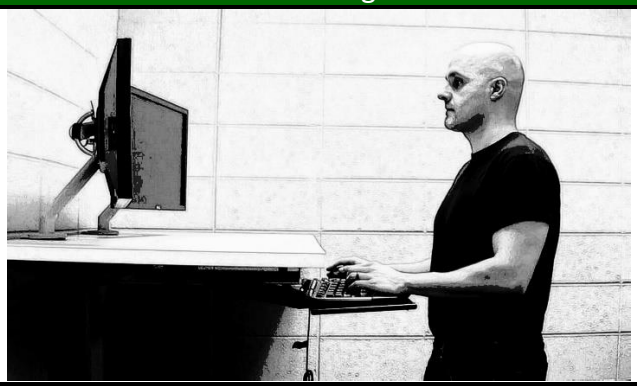
YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT

17. Avoid excessive reaching when working at the computer. Your keyboard, mouse, files, telephone and other frequently used items should be within easy reach.
18. Use a document holder positioned in line with your monitor and keyboard to position copy or reference materials. It can also be placed below your monitor.
19. When writing at the computer, avoid excessive reaching over the keyboard or work materials. A sturdy document holder can double as a writing surface if appropriately positioned.
20. Position the monitor so that the viewable part of the screen allows you to keep your neck in a neutral or straight position. The monitor should be centered directly in front of you. The top of the computer screen should be at about eye level, so that you are looking at it with a slight downward gaze.
21. Position your monitor to eliminate excessive glare. Avoid reflections from windows or overhead lighting.
22. Customize your computer. The screen font, zoom, contrast, pointer size, speed, and color can all be adjusted to maximize your comfort and efficiency.

YOUR LIFE STYLE

24. Aerobic exercise will help to sustain strength, improve cardiovascular conditioning, and counteract the strain of sedentary computer use.
25. Routine use of non-prescribed medications or wrist braces is NOT recommended. If you begin to develop symptoms, seek further information or see your physician. Slight changes made early can avoid future complications in many cases!

Example Workstation Setup: The workstations below are examples of an ideal workstation setup and show neutral posture while working on the computer. When setting up your workstation use these pictures as examples and guidelines to follow.

Sitting	Standing
	

Ergonomics Program Resources

- CSU Ergonomics Program Home Webpage
- Ergonomic Evaluation Request
- Ergo Lab & Equipment Trials
- Ergonomics Matching Funds Program
- Online Workstation Setup Training

Contact Information

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