WHO KNEW SITTING COULD BE SO HARD!

Find out how ergonomics can help make it easier.

Chances are, you probably don't think your job is dangerous. But even if your job is relatively safe, that doesn't mean you're not at risk for injury.

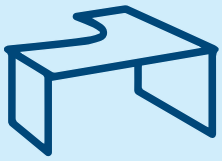
In fact, workplace injuries are more common than you'd think. Usually, workers experience pain in their back, arms, wrists, neck and shoulders caused by the strain of repetitive movements, sitting in the same position for a long time, or overuse. Over time, this physical stress can lead to more serious problems, such as tendon injuries and bursitis.

That's why it's so important that you pay attention to your body throughout the day. And that might be as easy as setting up your workstation according to ergonomics.

What is ergonomics?

It's the study of people's efficiency in their work environment. The goal of office ergonomics is to set up your workstation to help you do your job in a safe and efficient way. By taking a closer look at your environment, you can learn new ways to be more comfortable at work and lower your risk for injury and stress.

Start by double checking these important parts of your workstation.*,**



DESK OR WORK SURFACE

- Tall enough to allow your knees and thighs to fit comfortably underneath. Raise the desk or raise your chair as needed.
- Large enough for all your work, and organized to keep everything comfortably within reach.
- Supportive of your wrists. If the edge is too hard, use padding or a wrist rest.

CHAIR

- Supportive of your normal spinal curves, including your lower back.
- Adjustable, so that you can keep your knees beneath your desk and your feet flat on the floor. If you cannot rest your feet on the floor, a footrest or stool can help keep pressure off your lower back.
- Allows your arms to stay close to your sides with an adjustable armrest.
- Padded and breathable.

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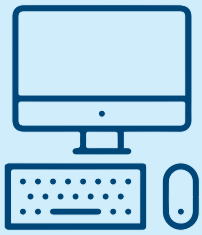


COMPUTER MONITOR, KEYBOARD AND MOUSE

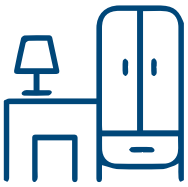
- The computer monitor should be easy to see without leaning forward or looking up or sideways. It should be in front of you and the screen height should be about eye level.
- Monitor should be less than an arm's length away. If your eyes are feeling strained, or you're experiencing vision problems or headaches, try a glare guard.
- Keyboard should be at a height that keeps your elbows bent at about 90 degrees. If your wrists are feeling uncomfortable, try different keyboard styles, tilt angles or wrist supports.
- Your mouse should be easy to use without a lot of movement. Keep it on the same surface as your keyboard, with your wrist straight, your arm close to your side and your hand below elbow level.

DOCUMENT HOLDER

- Positioned level with your computer monitor if you often reference paper materials while typing. This helps prevent your eyes from needing to refocus continually.

TELEPHONE

- If you talk and use your computer at the same time, talk with your phone on speaker or, if possible, use a headset. This will allow you to keep your head straight and in line with your computer monitor.



ROOM

- Comfortable in temperature.
- Quiet enough for you to focus.
- Well-lit and without glare, so you can see your work without straining.

YOU

That's right! Remember, ergonomics isn't just about the tools you use – it's about the way you use them.

- Sit or stand without putting stress on any part of your body. Try to keep your neck in a neutral position while you work. Keep your tools within an arm's length, without having to lean, bend or twist frequently.
- Vary between sitting and standing often and try taking 3-to 5- minute breaks (or change tasks) every 20 to 40 minutes.
- Stretch whenever you can – especially when muscles start to feel strained. You can get up and stretch your arms, shoulders, back and legs. Or simply shrug your shoulders occasionally while you work.

Together, all the way.®

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* WebMD. "Office Ergonomics: Topic Overview." http://www.webmd.com/pain-management/tc/office-ergonomics-topic-overview#1 (accessed July 24, 2017).

** Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. "Office ergonomics: Your how-to guide." http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/office-ergonomics/art-20046169 (April 20, 2016).

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