

ERGONOMICS FOR COMPUTER USERS

HOW TO SETUP YOUR WORKSTATION

Ergonomics is defined as the proper setup of a task area that allows a person to perform their duties with a minimum of strain on their musculo-skeletal system. This means that the muscles and joints perform the least amount of work (strain) while accomplishing the required job duties. American Chiropractic Clinic presents these guidelines as the most recommended configuration for a workstation.

Desktop height/Work area/Keyboard/Mouse

- The desktop should be set to a height that allows your forearms to be parallel to the ground and to both thighs (see diagram below). This will be lower than a standard desk due to the additional space needed for the keyboard on top of the work surface.
- The keyboard and monitor should be positioned in front, not to the sides, of the workers normal seated position while facing the desk. If more room is needed, then a second desktop arranged at 90° may be added to allow the proper setup for 2 work areas - the computer and the main desktop.
- While typing on the keyboard, your wrists should be held up in the air like a pianist holds their wrists while playing the piano, not resting down on the work surface, to prevent carpal tunnel syndrome. This one tip can prevent 80% of carpal tunnel syndromes! It will feel like more work at first, but will be better in time and become a normal part of your work posture. This position actually makes typing easier and less stressful. Wrist supports and guards are considered optional, as they have not yet been proven to prevent any of the carpal tunnel/repetitive motion disorders.
- When working with a mouse, the mouse/mouse pad needs to be placed close to the body so the operating arm is not in an outstretched position.

Chair height/setup

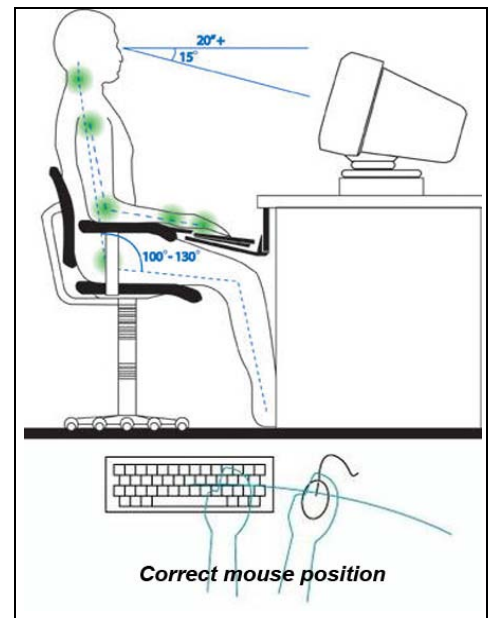
The chair height should be set so that your thighs are parallel to the ground when in normal sitting position with your feet flat on the floor (see diagram below). The backrest should be adjusted to provide adequate support to the lower and mid back regions in the same sitting posture. The armrests (if present) should support the forearms in the position indicated under item 1 above. A five pronged chair base with casters is best.

Monitor

The center of monitor screen should be approx 15° to 20° down from your straight-line vision (as in looking across the room - see diagram at right). Older monitors may be placed about 24" from the viewer to decrease eyestrain; flat screens can be closer. Reading glasses will help reduce eyestrain and neck/shoulder tension in those who wear "bifocals," by reducing the head tipping that occurs with long periods of time in front of a computer. Consult your eye doctor for evaluation of your visual performance at various close distances.

Stretching

Stand, stretch, or shift positions every 30-45 minutes to prevent your shoulder and back muscles from undue tightness or cramping from prolonged contraction.



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