

Computer Workstation Ergonomics

One surprising fact is that musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) accounted for 30% of injuries and illnesses with days away from work. That number is quite high considering there are some minor changes that we can do with our own workstations to reduce MSDs. To help reduce the development of MSDs on the job, follow this 12 step evaluation.

1. Ensure that your lower back, lumbar spine is being supported.
2. Place the monitor directly in front of the user and have the top inch of the screen at eye level.
3. Move either the light source or the monitor from glares or reflections from windows and lights.
4. The monitor should be positioned in such a way that when sitting properly, there is no need for squinting or leaning forward to properly see the monitor screen.
5. Feet should be rested firmly on the floor. If the chair and/or desk will not adjust, a foot stool may be used to get the feet in the proper position.
6. Use document holders when working extensively from documents to the screen. This will reduce leaning or twisting of the neck.
7. Wrists need to be in-line with the forearm when using the mouse or keyboard. This will reduce wrist strain.
8. The elbows should form a 90 ° angle when using the keyboard and mouse. The shoulders should be at a relaxed position and elbows should not be positioned out from the body.
9. The monitor and keyboard should be directly in-front of the user. There should be a straight line when moving from the user's nose past the keyboard and onto the monitor.
10. The keyboard should be tilted back and NOT toward the user, this will reduce the wrist angle.
11. When working at a computer station, it is important to take mini-breaks. Approximately 30 seconds to two minutes is enough to rejuvenate the musculoskeletal system.
12. Stretch the neck, arms, back and legs to loosen up tight or tired muscles.

Ask for a formal ergonomic assessment if the above steps do not relieve the strain placed on the body during computer workstation responsibilities. For further information to identify and prevent these types of injuries in your workplace, contact the Frank Gates/Safe X Safety Hotline at 1-888-588-9848 or our Ask a professional email: frankgates@safex.us