

Tips on Healthy Computer Use

Customize your computer settings. The screen font, contrast, pointer size, speed, and color can be adjusted to maximize comfort and efficiency.



Your life style and physical fitness affect how you feel at work. Stay in shape by stretching and exercising regularly.

References

www.ergonomics.ucla.edu



Reduce glare. Place your monitor away from bright lights and windows. Use an optical glass glare filter when necessary. Take eye breaks and intermittently refocus on distant objects. Try palming your eyes in your hands to reduce eye fatigue.

Work at a reasonable pace and take frequent stretch breaks. Take 1 or 2 minute breaks every 20-30 minutes, and 5 minute breaks every hour. Every few hours, try to get up and move around.

Use of non-prescribed medications, such as wrist splints, can often be more harmful than helpful. If you begin to develop symptoms, seek help. Early intervention can prevent future problems.

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Repetitive and prolonged use of a computer keyboard and/or mouse can lead to muscle aches and discomfort. Posture and positioning are important. Try to incorporate the following tips into your work style to avoid problems.



Maintain good posture when working. Sit all the way back in the chair against the backrest. Keep your knees equal to, or lower, than your hips with your feet supported.

Keep your elbows in a slightly open angle (100° to 110°) with your wrists in a straight position. The keyboard tilt can help you attain the correct arm

position. A negative tilt (front of keyboard higher than back) helps when working in upright sitting positions. If you recline, a positive tilt (front of the keyboard lower than the back) might be necessary.



Avoid overreaching. Keep the mouse and keyboard within close reach. Center the most frequently used section of the keyboard directly in front of you.

Center the monitor in front of you at arm's length distance and position the top of the monitor 2" to 3" above seated eye level. You should be able to view the screen without turning or tilting your head up or down.

Place source documents on a document folder positioned between your monitor and keyboard. If there is not enough space, place documents on an elevated surface close to your screen.

Use good typing technique. Float your arms above the keyboard and keep your wrist straight when typing. If you use a wrist rest, use it to support your palms when pausing, not while typing. Hit the keyboard keys with light force. The average user keys four times harder than necessary.



Keep your wrists straight and hands relaxed when using your mouse. Don't hold the pointer with a tight grip or extend fingers above the activation buttons. Avoid moving the pointer with your thumb or wrist. Movement should originate at your shoulder and elbow.

Limit repetitive motions. Reduce keystrokes with macros and software programs such as voice recognition. Reduce pointing device movement with scroll locks and keystroke combinations.

