

OFFICE ERGONOMICS AT THE COMPUTER



REDUCING YOUR RISK OF STRAIN & STRESS

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In today's office environment, computers play an important and vital role. Many workers find themselves entering data or communicating via computer terminals. Unfortunately, if the computer workstation is not properly set up, health problems could arise.

This pamphlet gives tips that will help computer operators avoid cumulative trauma disorders (CTD). CTDs are disorders of the muscles, tendons, ligaments, and nerves. CTDs can be caused by a number of risk factors as the human body interacts with a machine. Some examples of CTDs are carpal tunnel syndrome, tendinitis, bursitis, neck problems, and back problems.

The purpose of this publication is to identify some of the risk factors of CTDs and describe some simple corrections. Hopefully, this will lower the operator's risk of developing CTDs.

Keep in mind that each job must be customized for the individual. Consult the operator for his/her preference.

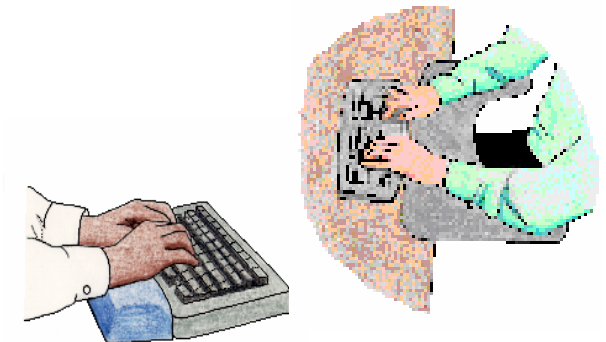
Tip #1:

Keep arms, wrists and hands parallel to the floor when using the keyboard, mouse, etc. Avoid more than a 10° deviation from parallel. This may involve raising or lowering the keyboard or the operator.



Tip #2:

Use palm rests, arm rests, or elbow rests to help support some of the arm weight. Do not rest arms or wrists on sharp edges of desks.



Tip #3:

Use a copy holder mounted to the right or left of the monitor. Arrange the copy holder so it is in the same plane as the monitor. This will help reduce neck problems and eye fatigue.



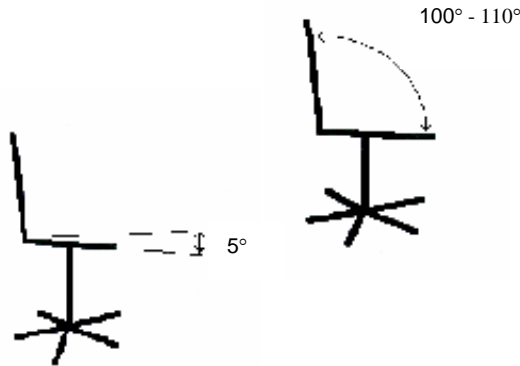
Tip #4:

The top of the monitor should be even with or slightly lower than the level of the eyes. Bifocal wearers may need special computer glasses, so they can look straight ahead and not have to tilt their heads back in order to use their glasses. Consult with your eye doctor about the proper type of glasses. Locate the monitor so that glare from windows or overhead lights does not cause a reflection on the screen.



Tip #5:

The computer operator should have a good, adjustable chair. There should be lumbar support for the middle back. The seat pan & the chair back should form a 100 - 110° angle. The seat pan should tilt slightly forward (below horizontal) about 5°. Keep the thigh parallel to the floor and feet flat on the floor or on a footrest.



Tip #6:

Walk around periodically. Sitting too long is bad for the back and can lead to back pain & problems. Even sitting too long in the best chair is bad for the human back.

Get up at least every hour & move around. (People with existing back problems may need to move around more often.) There are computer programs available that prompt the operator to stop & get up.

Get up and walk down the hall, walk to the filing cabinets, walk to the printer, or to the copier. This will help

get the blood flowing to the structures in the back.

Tip #6:

Practice job enlargement. Try to arrange jobs so that the operator does varied tasks during the day. Modifying jobs (such as data entry) so that the person working can also file, or copy, or deliver material, can help reduce stress & strain. It also helps if the operator has some control over his or her work activities. The goal is to have office workers enjoy their work.

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