

live well, work well

# Posture: Office Ergonomics

The key to preventing work-related neck and back injuries is to evaluate your workstation and make sure it is ergonomically correct and promotes good posture. The discomfort and pain from slouching at a desk all day is very common, with one in every three office workers suffering pain at least once a week. If you are working at an ergonomically incorrect workstation and practice poor posture, you can suffer from neck, shoulder, wrist and elbow discomfort.

## Good Posture Tips

There are two ways to help promote good posture at work:

- Focus on your posture.
- Concentrate on the setup of your workstation.

Typically, aches and pains from office work are caused by physical stress from prolonged and awkward positions, repetitive motions and overuse. When applied to your workstation, these helpful tips will help promote good posture and correct ergonomics:

- Chair position – Adjust the height of your chair so that your feet rest comfortably on the floor, with your knees about level with your hips, making sure your seat is not pressing against the back of your knees.

- Back support – Keep your backbone straight, shoulders back, abdomen and buttocks pulled in, and chin tucked. If your chair doesn't allow this, try placing a cushion between the curve of your lower back and the back of the chair.
- Footrest – Rest your feet on a flat surface. If your chair is too high consider using a footrest.
- Computer monitor – Position your monitor 18 to 30 inches from your eyes. The top of your screen should be at eye level or below so you look slightly down at your work. If glare is a problem, turn off some or all overhead lights and close blinds if possible.
- Key objects – Arrange frequently used objects – such as pens, phones and your coffee cup – within 10 inches of your body.
- Headsets – Use a headset if you frequently talk on the phone and type or write at the same time.
- Wrist rest – Keep your wrists in a straight, natural position when using your keyboard. Do not use your wrist rest while typing. Use it to take occasional breaks from

typing.

- Mouse – Place your mouse to the side of your keyboard so you don't have to reach too far to use it.

## Prevention

It's never too late to start practicing good posture and office ergonomics. Besides following the previous tips, it is beneficial to take stretching breaks throughout the day. Sitting at a desk all day, even with the best posture and ergonomics, can still be stressful on your body. On average, your body can only tolerate one position for about 20 minutes before needing to be readjusted. Taking a one-minute break every 20 minutes is helpful.



## Did you know...?

According to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, back injuries accounted for one out of every five workplace injuries or illnesses that resulted in days away from work in 2008.