



NOTES

Your doctor or therapist has given you this patient education handout to further explain or remind you about an issue related to your health. This handout is a general guide only. If you have specific questions, discuss them with your doctor or therapist.

Staying Safe at Work

YOU DON'T HAVE TO CARRY HEAVY EQUIPMENT or walk on rooftops to sustain a workplace injury. Nearly 2 million workers become injured from simply sitting at their desks, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Posture, repetitive motion and office equipment positioning are among the factors that cause these cumulative trauma disorders.

But workplace injuries aren't inevitable. Your office can be safe if you follow these guidelines:

Posture

- When viewing the computer screen, make sure your head is upright.
- Your shoulders should be in a relaxed position.
- Your arms should be close to your sides in a relaxed and comfortable position.
- Your elbows should be bent at a 100- to 110-degree angle when you use the keyboard or pointer.

Keyboard/Pointing Device

- The home row keys should be positioned directly in the center of the trunk of your body.
- The keyboard height and slope should be easily adjusted.
- The pointing device should be within close reach and at the same level as the keyboard.

Chairs

- The chair height should be adjusted so feet are flat on the floor.
- Hips should be as far back in the chair as possible.
- The chair back should support the lower back.
- The chair backrest height should be adjusted to provide maximum support.
- Seats should be long and wide enough to support the hips and thighs.
- The chair should have armrests so your arms can rest comfortably.

Computer Screen

- The top of the screen should be slightly below eye-level.
- The screen should be at the proper tilt and height so you can view it without raising or lowering your chin.

- The screen should be approximately an arm's reach away from you.
- Documents should be placed on stands beside the monitor.

Lighting

- Sufficient light should be provided so you can complete reading tasks without straining your eyes.
- There shouldn't be glare on screens from windows, lights and surfaces.

While positioning equipment appropriately can ease stress on your body, you also need to stretch the joints and muscles that become short and tightened.

Here are a few quick stretches you can perform at work:

Neck Stretch

- Tilt ear toward shoulder, and reach up while touching the top of your head with your palm. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat two to three times. Reverse sides.

Overhead Reach

- Take a deep breath, and reach up over your head with both arms. Hold for a few seconds, and exhale while lowering arms slowly. Repeat five times.

Shoulder Pinch

- Place arms behind your head. Relax your shoulders, and squeeze shoulder blades together while keeping shoulders back and down. Hold for five seconds, and repeat five times.

Chair Rotation Stretch

- Sit in a chair, and wrap feet around the chair legs. Reach behind your body, and grab the back of the chair. Pull gently to increase stretch in your mid-back. Hold for five seconds, and repeat five times.

Forearm Stretch

- Hold your arms straight at waist height and face fingers up. Hold on at fingers and stretch wrist back. Make sure the fingers and thumb are kept together. Hold five to 10 seconds, and repeat two or three times. ■

Information adapted from UCLA's Environment Health & Safety department Web site, accessed via <http://ergonomics.ucla.edu/Ergowebev2.0/articles/exercise.htm>