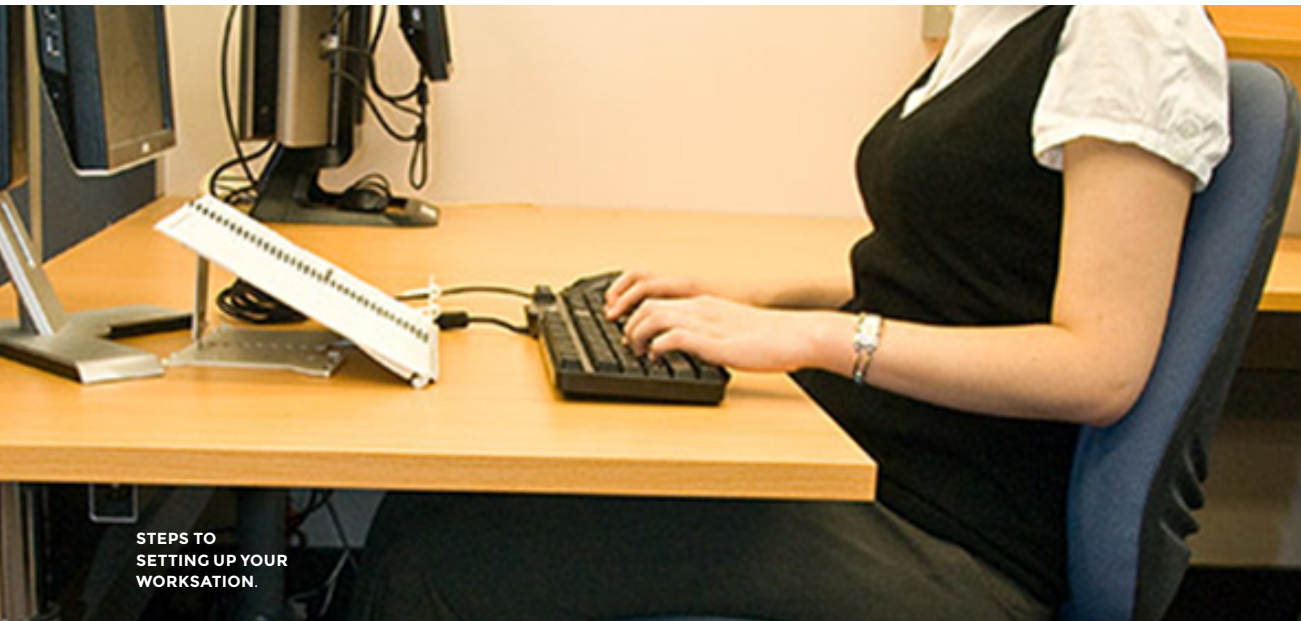


Office ergonomics



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA



STEPS TO
SETTING UP YOUR
WORKSTATION.

Repetitive and prolonged use of a computer keyboard and/or mouse may lead to muscle aches and discomfort.

Having incorrect posture from not being correctly set-up at your workstation or poor work techniques can often be the cause of such injuries.

This guide has been prepared to help with setting up your workstation and assist in preventing injuries.

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1.Steps to setting up your workstation

Step 1

ADJUST YOURSELF TO THE CORRECT HEIGHT

Adjust your chair so your wrists are level with the keyboard when typing. Your elbows should be at 90 degrees and under your shoulder.

If your feet are not flat on the floor after adjusting yourself you will need a footrest.

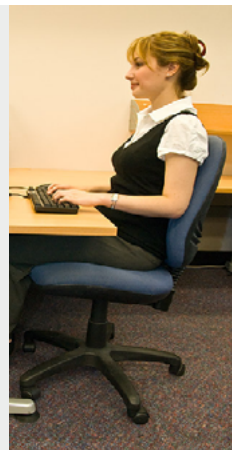


Step 2

ADJUST YOUR CHAIR

Adjust your back rest so that it is positioned in the curve of your lower back. Check the angle of your back rest. It should be 90-95 degrees.

Next check the angle of your seat. It should be at 90-95 degrees. Then check the space between your knees and the seat. It should be no more than 2-3 finger spaces.



Having your back rest positioned correctly plays an important part in preventing back, neck and shoulder strain.

Sitting forward places strain on your lower back and neck. Leaning back too far will place strain on your lower back, neck and shoulders.

Sitting in an upright position places the least amount of strain on your lower back. The back rest needs to be adjusted so that it supports your lower back.

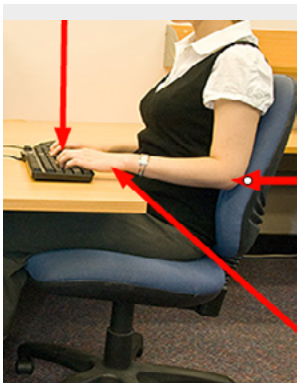
Step 3

POSITION YOUR KEYBOARD AND MOUSE

Ensure the letter section of your keyboard is centred in front of your body. Ensure your mouse is positioned to prevent over reaching.

Check the angles of your elbows when using your keyboard and mouse. They should be at 90 degrees and under your shoulders.

Check the angles of your wrists when using your keyboard and mouse. They should be straight, not bending in any direction and not touching the desk.



Having your keyboard and mouse positioned correctly plays an important part in preventing wrist, arm and shoulder strain.

Having your mouse too far away places strain on your shoulder and arm.

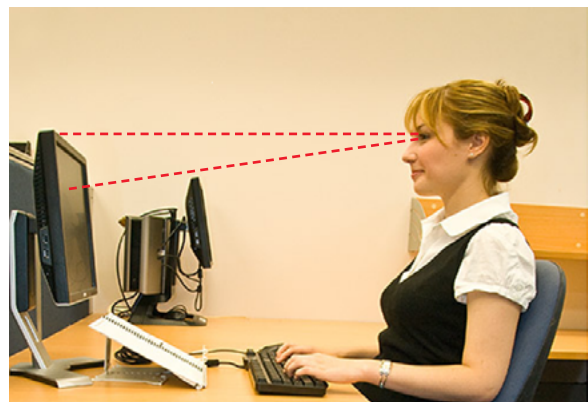
Step 4

MONITOR POSITION

Adjust your monitor so that it is centred in front of your body and so that it is approximately one arms length away.

Your eyes should sit in the top third of the screen.

If you are using more than one monitor you should position your primary monitor as described and any other monitors should be arranged so they can be easily viewed without having to bend your neck.



2. Equipment

CHAIRS

Chairs should be fully adjustable to accommodate different sized workers (with seat height, back rest height and back rest tilt adjustments) and should not tip or slip. A fivepoint base is the most stable. Castors should be used on carpet and glides or braked castors on hard surfaces. Arm rests are not recommended as they can prevent you getting as close to your desk as possible.

If you are tall, an adjustable seat pan or a deeper seat pan will help to get more of your legs supported by the chair.

If your chair is broken or does not fit you please call FMD on 42213917.

KEYBOARDS



Keyboard use

The keyboard should be placed directly in front of the body to avoid twisting the neck and torso. The keyboard should be positioned in front of the computer monitor with the letters G & H approximately in line with your navel. This is particularly good positioning when doing a lot of keyboard work. The keyboard should be positioned according to the distance the forearms extend from the neutral position of the elbows by the side of the body. Arms should be parallel to the floor when placed gently on the keyboard. The seated elbow height should be a little higher than the height of the keyboard. Raise or lower the office chair to achieve this position.

The slope of the keyboard should be as close to the flat position as possible. This is largely determined by what feels comfortable; however there should be a good straight alignment across the forearms, wrists and hands. Providing a keyboard without a numeric pad can reduce the keyboard width and allow the mouse to be operated closer to the user

Keyboard alternatives

You can use voice recognition software as alternative to typing.

HEADSETS



If you are using your phone frequently you should consider using a headset to prevent awkward neck postures. Especially if you write notes or use your computer while talking on the phone.

Your phone should also be positioned on your non dominant side within easy reach. If the phone is used rarely then, it does not need to be positioned close.



MOUSE



The mouse should fit the user's hand and not cause unnecessary pressure on the wrist and forearm muscles. Ensure the mouse is not too large so that the wrist is in a neutral position during use.

Mouse use

Mouse operation can be moved from left handed to right handed use to minimise strain on the one hand. Ensure the button on the right side of the mouse is always used for primary functions by changing the mouse settings in the control panel, selecting mouse and changing button configuration to switch primary and secondary buttons. The mouse may also be customised in this area including double click speed, pointer speed and scrolling.

Set the tracking speed of the mouse to a setting that suits you. Hold the mouse gently when moving it over the mouse pad or desk. Take the hand off the mouse at frequent intervals. Use keyboard shortcuts where possible. If the task is primarily a mouse activity, move the mouse towards the middle of the desk and push the keyboard back. Position the mouse directly to the right or left hand side of the keyboard. Line the top of the mouse pad with the top edge of the keyboard as a visual cue to correct placement and always aim to keep the mouse on the mouse pad.

Mouse alternatives



Alternatives to the standard mouse are designed to change hand and arm postures and increase efficiency. They include a wide range of operations, including rollers, pens, balls, pads and glide points. The main difference between a mouse and these devices is that the hand and arm remain stationary while the wrist is at an angle and the fingers or thumb stretch.

WRIST RESTS OR GEL PADS

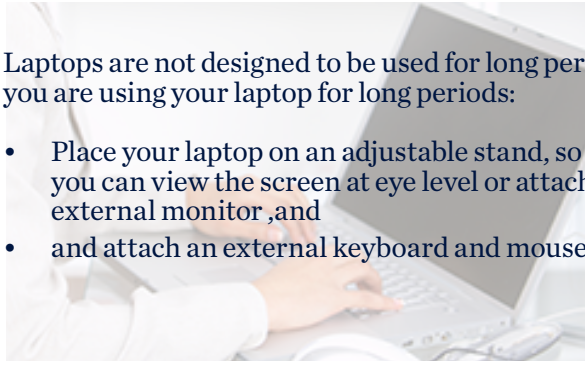


Wrist rests or gel pads are not recommended for use in the office environment. Gel wrist rests can cause wrist anchoring. When you rest on your wrists while typing/mousing, you can compress the blood vessels, tendons, and nerves that travel through your wrist. Resting your wrist for too long can potentially cause inflamed tendons and nerve entrapment. Anchoring your wrist can increase the risks of a musculoskeletal disorder like carpal tunnel syndrome. Wrist rests are designed to provide support during pauses, when not typing (such as when reading from the screen).

LAPTOPS

Laptops are not designed to be used for long periods. If you are using your laptop for long periods:

- Place your laptop on an adjustable stand, so you can view the screen at eye level or attach to external monitor, and
- and attach an external keyboard and mouse



DOCUMENT HOLDERS

If you are reading from documents while typing you should use a document stand. The stand should be either directly under the monitor or off to the side on an angle. Other frequently used items should be within easy reach.



DESKS

Workstations should be designed so that workers can carry out their work in a comfortable, upright position with shoulders relaxed and upper arms close to the body. Different workers require different working heights so it is best to provide adjustable workstations to make the work height suitable for the person and the task.

Desks should be between 680 millimetres and 720 millimetres high (for a fixed height desk), have a depth of at least 900 millimeters, be at least 1500 millimeters wide and there should be enough room under your desk to move your legs freely.



Desk alternatives

Sit/Stand work platforms or desks

Sitting for prolonged periods can be damaging to your health. Sit/Stand work platforms and desks allow users to alternate between sitting and standing throughout the working day.

There is no established UOW policy for an individual to be deemed eligible to require an adjustable desk. There are two qualifying factors that contribute to the recommendation of an adjustable desk being pursued. This includes:

a) an assessment by UOW's WHS staff where the outcome demonstrates an adjustable height desk would assist the individual's work environment. Medical information may need to be provided to assist in this process and

b) a home entity (Faculty, School, Division, Unit) willing to fund the procurement of an adjustable height desk for the individual.



3. Rest Breaks , Stretches and Exercises

TAKING REGULAR BREAKS HELPS PREVENT INJURIES

It is very important to take rest breaks when working. Taking breaks will help to prevent injuries. There are a number of different types of breaks that allow for recovery or at least add variety to the work being undertaken.

They include

- Varying your work:-Performing different activities during the day.
- Structured breaks:-Lunch and morning tea breaks.
- Unstructured breaks:-Talking with a colleague instead of sending an email or getting a drink of water.
- Work pauses:-You should take regular pause breaks if you are performing a repetitive task. You should take a 1 to 2 minute break every half hour and if you have been working 4 hours you should take a longer break of at least 30min.



STRETCHES AND EXERCISE

Stretching

Although you may be hesitant to stretch at work keep in mind the benefits of stretching such as

- Improved flexibility
- Improved circulation, and
- Allowing your body time to recover after prolonged periods of repetitive work.

More information about stretching and stretch exercises can be found on the [Stretch@Work](#) web page.



Exercise

Taking part in regular physical activity reduces the risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure and obesity. It also helps to build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints reducing the risk of injury and promoting psychological well-being.

In particular, regular exercise not only aids in the prevention of musculoskeletal conditions, it helps to alleviate and reduce joint pain and stiffness and build strong muscle around the joints, and increases flexibility and endurance.



People who regularly exercise will be better able to cope with increases in workload and peak forces.

4. Related documents

<https://staff.uow.edu.au/content/groups/public/@web/@ohs/documents/doc/uow017063.pdf>