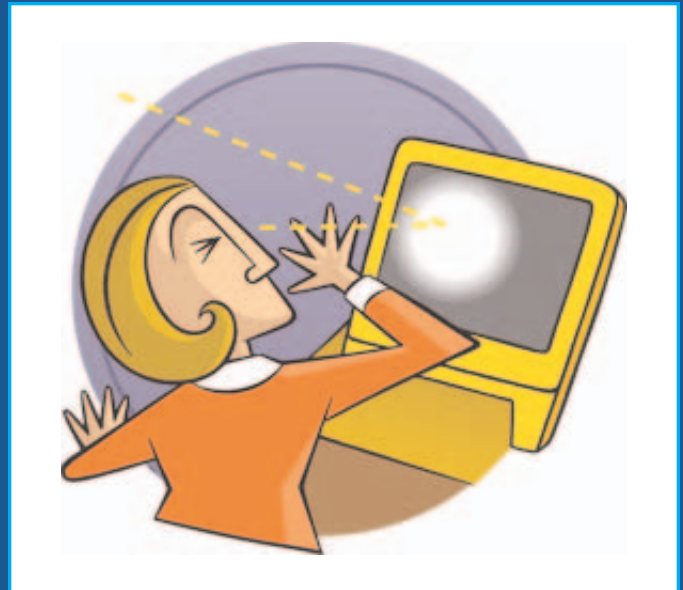




Ergo Tip 1

Keep A Straight Head...

Your monitor should be positioned directly in front of you during computer work. However, space constraints often result in the monitor being pushed to the side or into the corner. Repeatedly turning your head or holding it in awkward positions places considerable strain on your neck muscles. If you are unable to position the monitor directly in front of you consider adding an articulating keyboard platform.



Ergo Tip 2

A Glaring Error...

If you experience headaches or eyestrain at the computer you may want to check for glare. Simply turn off your monitor and observe what is reflected in your screen. The best way to combat glare is to eliminate its source. Try tilting or repositioning your monitor, turning off the lights, or closing blinds or windows. If all else fails, a glare screen can be used to reduce the effects of glare.



Ergo Tip 3

Your Dominant Eye...

Everyone knows their dominant hand but few know their dominant eye. To find your dominant eye make a small circle with your hands and peer through while focusing on a distant object. Alternate closing each eye. The eye that keeps the object in the circle is your dominant eye. Place reference documents to the side of the dominant eye. This will require less focusing and neck movement.



Ergo Tip 4

Your Head is Not A Bowling Ball...

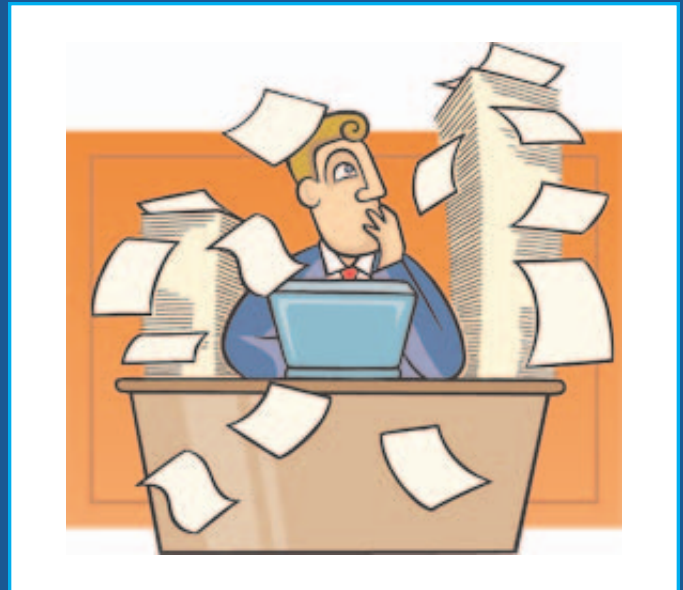
...but it weighs about as much – anywhere from 10-14 pounds. Craning your neck to view a screen too far away, bending it back to see a monitor too high, or bending it down to view a document on the desktop places strain on the neck and shoulders and increases risk of injury. Avoid bending your neck in any direction while working at the computer. Keeping your head straight could save your neck!



Ergo Tip 5

As Low As It Goes...

If you wear bifocals while operating a computer consider your relation to your monitor. Peering through the bottom of your lenses forces you to bend your neck back to see the screen. This places stress on the neck, which can develop into pain or injury. Lower your monitor as much as possible. A flat screen on an adjustable supporting arm is ideal for this purpose. If necessary, raise your chair and use a footrest. Also, consider alternative lenses for computer work.



Ergo Tip 6

A Paperless Society...?

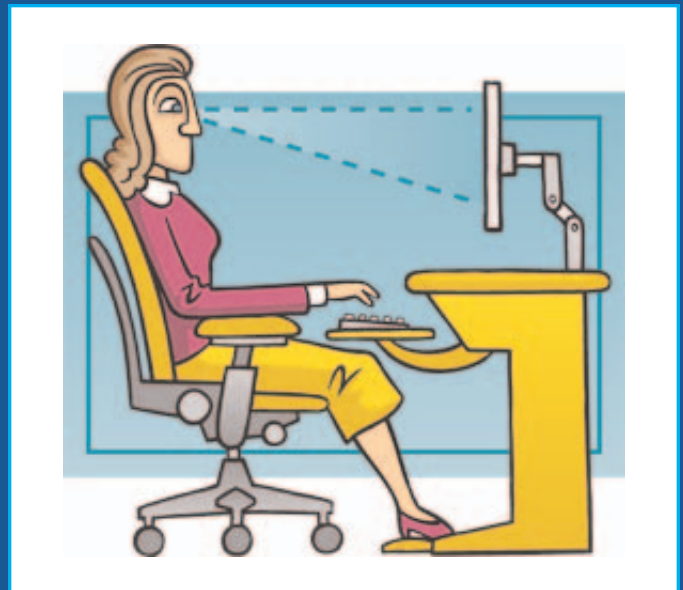
The computer was designed to free us from paper proliferation. Instead we collect more than ever. Studies show that workers spend hours each week searching for misplaced paperwork. Organizational filing tools can help you put away important files but still have them visible and within reach. When juggling multiple projects use these tools to prevent your work from becoming "out of sight, out of mind."



Ergo Tip 7

Positive About Negative Tilt...?

Research shows that typing is more comfortable when the keyboard is angled backwards in a "negative tilt." This position helps keep wrists straight while typing. However, you must use a keyboard platform. If your mouse slides off at this angle select a tray that has a mouse retention edge. Also, in selecting your platform, make sure the mechanism that it sits atop does not bump your knees under the worksurface.



Ergo Tip 8

Staying Neutral...

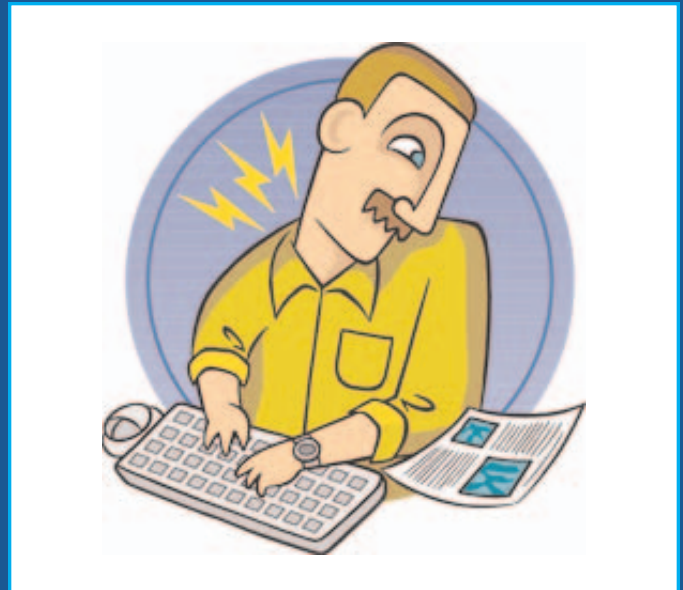
Keeping your body's joints in a mid-range of motion while working at the computer is known as "neutral posture." When your arms are relaxed at your sides and not reaching they are in neutral posture. Wrists that are kept straight (not bend down, up, or to either side) are also in neutral posture. Maintaining neutral posture will not only keep you safer, it can make you more comfortable and productive!



Ergo Tip 9

Are You Working in the Dark...?

Many computer users turn off their lights in overly lit offices to avoid eyestrain and headaches. Lighting levels do not need to be as bright for computer work as for reading or writing. For greater comfort, lower ambient lighting for computer work and provide directional lighting for documents or deskwork. A flexible task light can add the light where it is most needed.



Ergo Tip 10

Heads Up...

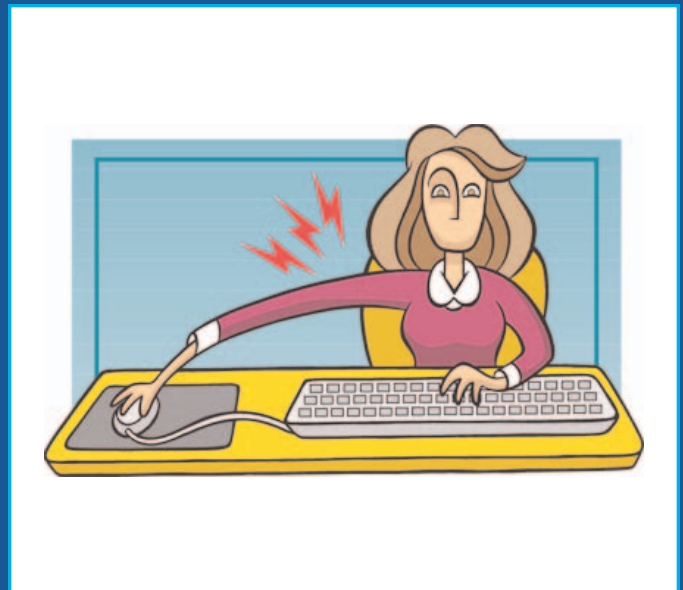
If you frequently refer to documents while working on the computer avoid placing them flat on the worksurface. Looking down places strain on the neck and can cause pain. Try clipping them to the side of the monitor or propping them on a document stand to the side of the monitor. Another alternative is to place them on an "in-line" document holder or a slotted keyboard platform that positions them between the keyboard and the monitor.



Ergo Tip 11

Avoiding Leg Lock...

Workstations are getting smaller. There is less room for storage. Some workers solve this by storing boxes and other objects beneath their work surface. This can restrict free leg movement and force workers into awkward or static postures. You should leave enough space under your workstation to be able to stretch out your legs. Reposition excess cords and your CPU if they are in the way.



Ergo Tip 12

Not All Keyboard Platforms Are Alike...

Workstation configuration and body characteristics can be limiting factors when it comes to keyboard platform selection. A broad shouldered worker may prefer a wider keyboard/mouse setup. A smaller person may require a closer mousing surface to reduce reach. Remember, a keyboard platform provides adjustability, but one size will not fit all people or places.



Ergo Tip 13

Don't Sit So Close To The Tube...
It can ruin your eyes.

Remember when your mother told you this after hours of watching TV? Today it also applies to your computer monitor. However, research has found that although computers can exacerbate symptoms of vision disorders they won't cause permanent damage to the eyes. Maintaining a distance of 18 – 30" from your screen offers greater visual comfort with less eye muscle strain from over-focusing.



Ergo Tip 14

Don't do the twist...

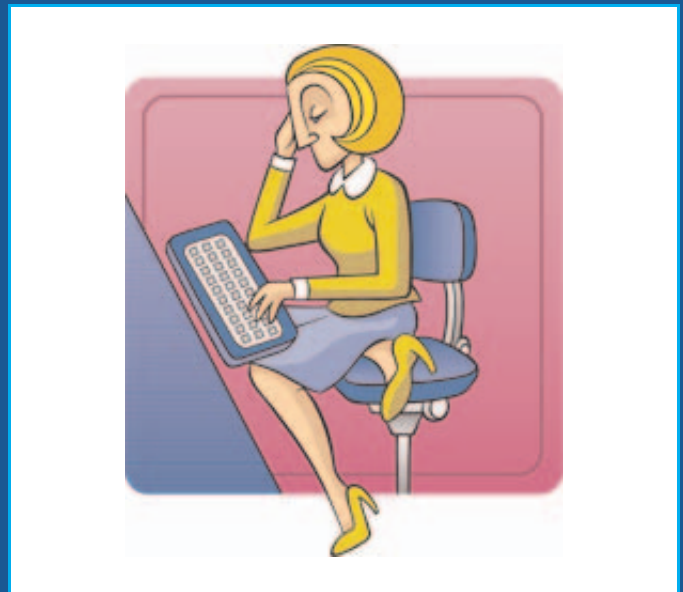
Bending and twisting in your chair can result in neck, shoulder or back pain. Prevent awkward positions by placing work tools – the telephone, a printer or other items you use regularly – close at hand. Avoid twisting your torso, reaching up or bending while reaching. Use organizational worktools to keep regularly used work items easy to reach and easy to find.



Ergo Tip 15

Elevate yourself to a comfortable level...

The first step in arranging your workstation is to adjust your chair. Position the seat height so your feet are flat on the floor with hips slightly higher than your knees. You should be able to use the keyboard without bent wrists or hunched shoulders. The monitor should be positioned so the top line of the screen is no higher than eye level. If you need to go higher raise your chair and use a footrest to support your feet.



Ergo Tip 16

Getting a leg up...

Computer workers frequently shift into awkward positions, such as sitting on one leg, in an attempt to get more comfortable. This posture can impede circulation and make you lethargic. If you find yourself doing this because you don't have adequate foot support try lowering your chair or adding a footrest. If it's just a habit, try to break it. Improved circulation will improve your comfort and energy throughout the day.



Ergo Tip 17

The Worksurface is the Wrong Surface...

...for your laptop that is. You need to get your laptop to right viewing height. Otherwise, you're liable to strain your neck as you attempt to find a comfortable viewing angle. A set of monitor blocks is a simple way to crate elevation. Other solutions include platforms or shelves that easily attach to a slatted wall or rail-like support. The shelf can then be positioned on the wall or rail at a precise height. (more will follow on this subject in Ergo Tip #18)



Ergo Tip 18

Taking the "lap" out of laptop...

Working with a laptop perched on your lap may place the keyboard at a comfortable height but it can wreak havoc on your neck. Bending your neck down to view the screen can strain neck muscles, which could lead to pain or injury over time. Elevate the laptop to a stable platform or use a monitor arm to position the top line of the screen at or a little below eye level. Then plug in a full-size keyboard and mousing device and go to work. (see Ergo tip #17)



Ergo Tip 19

Office hypnosis...

Studies show that computer workers blink less while viewing their monitor than when reading or even watching TV. This causes the eyes to dry out and can induce fatigue and eyestrain. Becoming "hypnotized" by your monitor can also reduce body movement, which contributes to muscle stiffness and soreness. Just as frequent movement at the computer is good for your body, it's also good for your eyes.



Ergo Tip 20

Tips for lugging your laptop...

The portability of laptops has enhances versatility in the way we work. However, the transportability of these delicate tools can be a concern. Carrying a heavy shoulder bag places an asymmetric load on your torso, which can lead to shoulder, neck and back problems. Consider purchasing a rolling cart. If you must use a shoulder bag, carry peripherals in a different bag to balance your load.



Ergo Tip 21

Don't stick your neck out...

Taking risks is common in business. But don't do it with your posture. Craning your neck forward during computer use increases risk of neck injury. If you have difficulty seeing the monitor, move it closer, increase font size, or have your vision checked. If you lean forward in your chair out of habit, form a new habit. Sit back. Keep your head over your shoulders and your neck out of pain.



Ergo Tip 22

Don't be narrow minded about your work surface...

The recommended distance to the monitor is 18 – 30." Anything closer may result in eyestrain from over-focusing. Oftentimes a computer monitor is placed on worksurface that is too shallow to also properly accommodate the keyboard. This usually positions the worker too close to the screen. If the depth of your work surface is insufficient, consider adding a keyboard platform to create distance.



Ergo Tip 23

Don't shrug off good posture...

Occasionally shrugging your shoulders during computer work can help stretch muscles and increase blood flow. However, keeping your shoulders hunched on a regular basis can result in pain or injury. This occurs if the keyboard is too high, the chair too low, or if the chair arms push up on the elbows. Relaxing your shoulders and keeping your elbows close to your side helps shrug off pain and possible injury.



Ergo Tip 24

Take a rest from your wrist rest...

A wrist rest can alleviate contact stress from hard or sharp surfaces while working at the computer. However, you should not plant your wrist on it while using the keyboard or mouse. Continuous resting places pressure on the very spot you are trying to protect. Use the wrist rest only for pauses or breaks from keying. Let your fingers float over the keys like a pianist does while performing. You'll perform better, too.



Ergo Tip 25

Office Ergo-cises – Part 1...

These periodic stretches can improve your body's circulation, reduce tension and help relieve the kind of muscle stress that can build up when working at the same position for long periods of time.

EXERCISE 1

Hold your right leg just below the knee and hug it to your chest. Hold for five to ten seconds. Switch legs and repeat.



Ergo Tip 26

Office Ergo-cises – Part 2...

These periodic stretches can improve your body's circulation, reduce tension and help relieve the kind of muscle stress that can build up when working at the same position for long periods of time.

EXERCISE 2

Lean forward to touch your toes. Hold for five to ten seconds then slowly return to an upright position.



Ergo Tip 27

Office Ergo-cises – Part 3...

These periodic stretches can improve your body's circulation, reduce tension and help relieve the kind of muscle stress that can build up when working at the same position for long periods of time.

EXERCISE 3

Extend your right leg and point your toes directly ahead. Slowly flex your ankle until your toes point straight ahead and hold for five seconds. Relax and repeat five times. Or rotate your ankle in each direction ten revolutions. Repeat with your left leg.



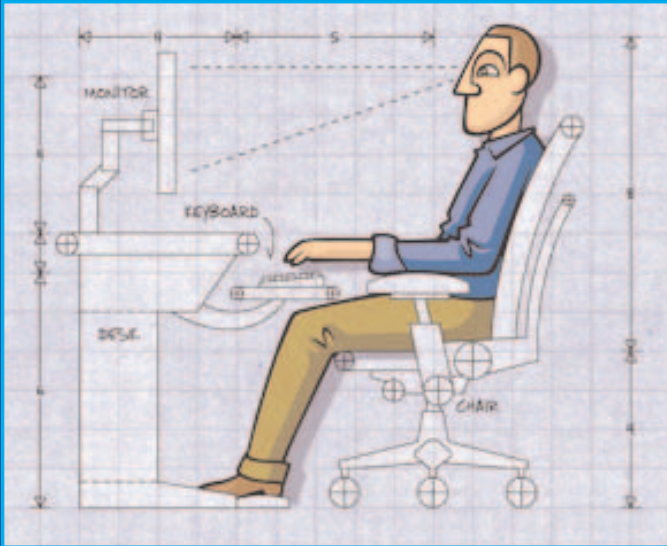
Ergo Tip 28

Office Ergo-cises – Part 4...

These periodic stretches can improve your body's circulation, reduce tension and help relieve the kind of muscle stress that can build up when working at the same position for long periods of time.

EXERCISE 4

Extend your arms overhead and clasp your left hand with your right hand. Keeping your arms fairly straight, gently pull your left arm to the right and hold for five seconds. Relax and repeat with your other side.



Ergo Tip 29

What is ergonomics?

Ergonomics examines a worker's relationship to work, work tools and the work environment. The goal is to achieve maximum efficiency of the human body while minimizing the risk of injury. Ergonomics is not "rocket science." Learning how to make simple adjustments to your workstation and habits can greatly enhance your well being and your productivity.



Ergo Tip 30

Avoid the "tuck"

Workers who lean forward when using the computer often find their feet drift back to rest on the chair base. Others even tuck their feet under the chair. Your feet need adequate support and the "foot tuck" doesn't provide it. Sitting back in the chair with the legs extended improves circulation and overall comfort. If foot support is an issue consider adding a footrest. Avoiding the "tuck" could improve your day.



Ergo Tip 31

Don't be so edgy

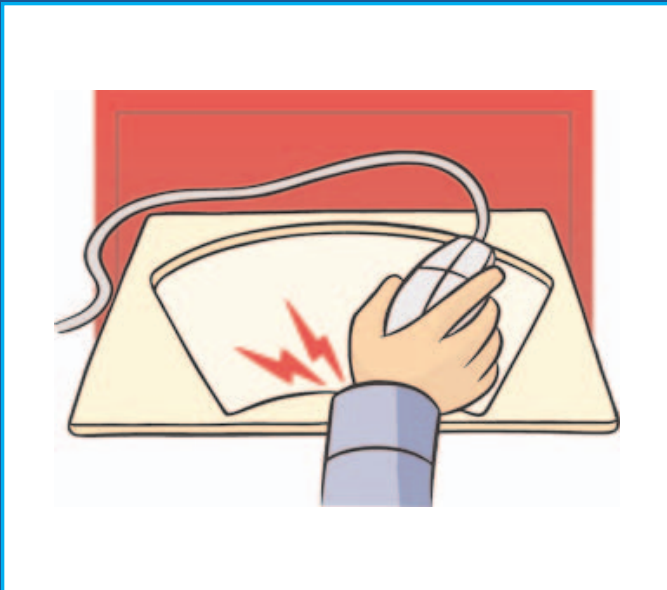
You may find yourself on the edge of your seat during a horror movie. But sitting on the edge of your chair while working on the computer places strain on back muscles and ligaments. Try to sit all the way back each time. If necessary, move your monitor closer or make the characters larger for easy viewing. Let the chair do its work of supporting your back so you can do your work more comfortably.



Ergo Tip 32

Keep it moving

Sitting still may be proper demeanor for schoolchildren but it is inadvisable for computer workers. A fixed posture held for too long can reduce blood flow to muscles and increase fatigue. Over time it can lead to pain and injury. Remember, regular movement keeps muscles from getting stiff and sore. So readjust your chair often, stretch regularly, and vary your tasks throughout the day.



Ergo Tip 33

A flick of the wrist

Moving your mouse with a back-and-forth wrist movement, often known as “windshield wiping”, increases risk of pain and injury to that area. Bending the wrist up, down, or to either side while mousing can place strain on the wrist nerves and tendons causing inflammation and nerve entrapment. Use whole arm motions when operating a mouse and avoid doing the twist with your wrist.



Ergo Tip 34

Keeping your focus

Eye muscles, just like other muscles, get tired when held in a static posture. Staring at a monitor at a fixed distance forces your eye muscles to work hard to converge the image while focusing on the screen. To eliminate static vision and periodically give your eyes a rest focus away from the screen every 20 minutes on an object 25 – 40 feet away to help prevent eyestrain.



Ergo Tip 35

Dueling monitors

If you use two monitors throughout the day position the one you use most often closer to you. If you use them equally, center them directly in front of you and angle them in a slight outward “V” shape. If both monitors share the same keyboard, you can also use a keyboard platform that slides laterally so you can be in line with both monitors.



Ergo Tip 36

Sound Advice

Noise. NOISE! It's often overlooked as an ergonomic issue. But the impact of interruptions from ambient noise on both workplace productivity and worker well being has been documented in several government studies. Newer speech privacy systems can effectively “block” nearby conversations with a technologically advanced, comfortable sound. And reduce worker stress levels. An aural privacy system can address the need for oral privacy.