

A Prescription for Working Smart at the Office and at Home

Courtesy of:

- Peterborough Physiotherapy and Sports Injuries Clinic (705) 741-2284
- Chemong Physiotherapy (705) 292-9888
- Lindsay Physiotherapy (705) 324-8512
- Lindsay Rehab Health Centre (705) 324-0404

In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the number of injuries resulting from work stations and work habits that do not follow proper principles of ergonomics.

The following can help you work more safely and comfortably, avoiding the risk of injury.

Chair Tactics

1. Chairs are like shoes, make sure you select the right size. Also make sure you allow for a trial period.
2. Choose a chair with an adjustable backrest (ideally, one that adjusts forward and back, up and down). If your chair doesn't have proper lumbar support to maintain proper spine curvature, use a lumbar roll, rolled up towel, small pillow or cushion.
3. Adjust your chair to the height that allows your feet to rest flat on the floor. Ensure the angle between your thigh and lower leg is 90 degrees or slightly greater. If not, use a foot rest (an old phone book or box will suffice). Remember: the front edge of your chair should not contact the back of your knees.
4. Use a chair with a tilt option. It will provide you with a range of work positions,



allowing you to shift your body's load so some muscle groups and the spine can rest.

Keyboard Pointers

1. It's important to ensure your keyboard is at a height that allows your elbows to bend at a 90 degree angle or slightly greater. Your wrists should be in a flat, neutral position. (A "wrist rest,"
- from an office specialty store, can help maintain a neutral wrist position. You can also create your own rest using foam or bubble wrap from packaging.)
2. To correct the problem of a desk that doesn't allow for a proper keyboard height, use a multi-adjustable keyboard holder with an articulating arm.

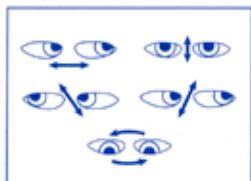
If using a mouse, use a keyboard holder that is long enough to accommodate a mouse and mouse pad.

Mouse Traps to Avoid

1. Maintain a neutral wrist position when using your mouse.
2. Hold the mouse lightly using all of your fingers and manoeuvre it using gentle pressure.
3. Make sure your mouse and pad are as close to the keyboard as possible to avoid over reaching.

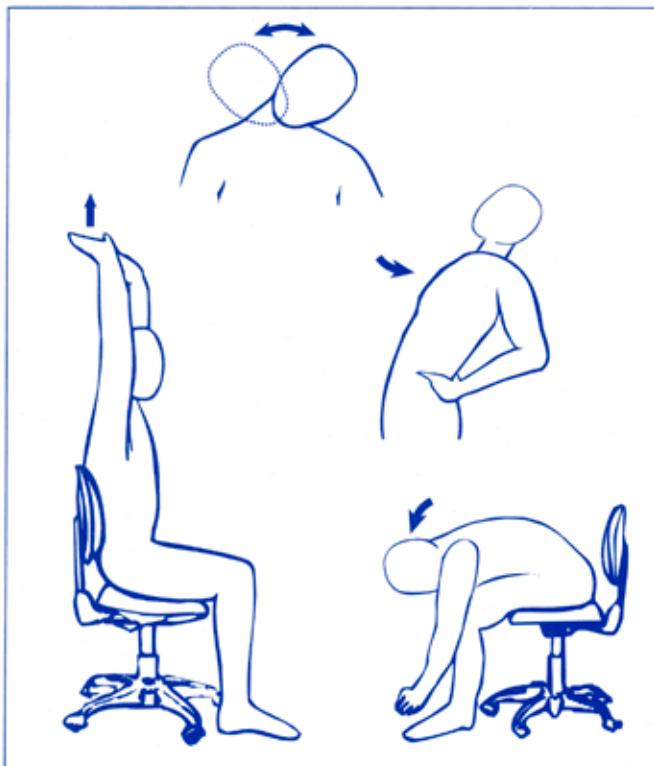
Measuring Up

1. The top of your computer screen should be at eye level or slightly lower. Your screen should be approximately 18-24" from your eyes. Check to ensure your monitor has adequate resolution.
2. Use a document holder to allow you to read documents at eye level and close to your computer screen.



Real Eye Openers

1. To relieve eye strain: periodically focus on objects far away from your work area; blink more often; use eye drops; keep your computer screen clean.
2. Avoid glare and reflections on the screen by reducing bright light from fluorescents and windows. Reposition your monitor to shield the glare or use an anti-glare screen.
3. If you wear bifocals or trifocals, lower the height of your monitor until your eyeglass correction works comfortably and you can maintain your neck in a neutral position.
4. Exercise your eye muscles to provide further relief (see above).



Take a Stretch Break
Taking the time to stretch during your work day will help relieve fatigue and improve productivity. The following are some stretches we recommend to help improve your blood flow, and provide relief for the muscles you use.



How to Stretch
Stretching should be done slowly without bouncing. Do these stretches 2-3 times each periodically throughout the day until you feel a slight, easy stretch and hold for 5-20 seconds. The key is to be relaxed while you concentrate on the area being stretched.

For more information contact:

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