

Office Ergonomics: Tips to Create a Safe and Productive Office

Most office workers would agree that their jobs require a delicate balance of key elements, including keyboarding and answering the telephone. Repeating these tasks each day places tremendous strain on our muscles and joints. Improper design and set-up of office space can compound these daily stresses and lead to repetitive strain injuries.

Repetitive strain injuries have skyrocketed in the last two decades due to the increasing reliance on workplace technology. Health Canada has estimated that musculoskeletal disorders, including back pain, cost society \$16.4 billion in combined direct (treatment and rehabilitation) and indirect (lost productivity) costs.

A new field known as "ergonomics" has emerged in response to these injuries and costs. Ergonomics is the study of workplace equipment design and arrangement aimed at ensuring that individuals can perform safely and efficiently in their work environment.

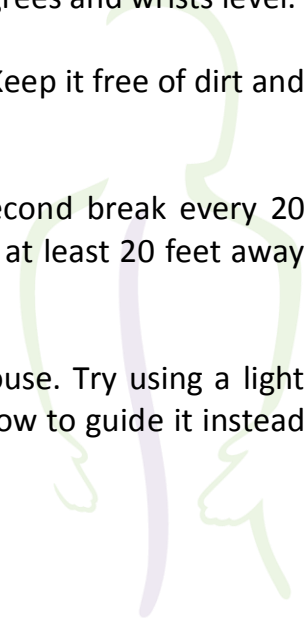
Enhancing your set-up often requires only a few simple changes that will help make your job easier, safer, and more efficient.

The Keyboard: Position it above your lap. Ensure that you can type with your arms relaxed, close to your body with elbows bent at 90 degrees and wrists level.

The Computer Monitor: Position it directly in front of you. Keep it free of dirt and smudges, in order to reduce glare.

Allow the muscles in your eyes to relax by taking a 20 second break every 20 minutes, during which you look at an object that is located at least 20 feet away from you.

The Mouse: Some workers have a vice-like grip on the mouse. Try using a light grip to avoid strain. When you move it around use your elbow to guide it instead of your wrist.



The Telephone: Use your hand to support the telephone against your ear, and alternate regularly instead of cradling the phone between the ear and shoulder. Consider using a headset or speaker to limit the strain on your neck and arms.

The Chair. Sit upright and all the way back. You can even roll up a towel and place it against the arch of your back for lumbar spine support. Your chair's height should be adjusted to a level at which your knees are bent at a 90-100 degree angle, with your feet touching the floor.

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Spending some time to make simple ergonomic changes to your work environment can improve your comfort and productivity. If you experience any pain or symptoms that may be related to your work, don't delay in consulting a chiropractor.

Doctors of chiropractic are specialists, who provide drug-free, hands-on treatment that targets the source of pain. Studies show that chiropractic treatment is increasingly recognized as one of the safest and most effective solutions for most patients with back pain.

