

"Top 10" Ways To Monitor Your Workstation Health

- 1 **Keep feet on the ground.** Make sure that your feet are touching the floor or a footrest when seated. Knees should be at a 90-degree angle. This distributes weight better and takes pressure off the upper body. Consider investing in a height-adjustable chair, or use a stool.
- 2 **Sit up straight.** Make sure that you sit tall with weight on the buttocks and feet. The pelvis should be straight up and down. Chairs with adjustable backs and arms aid in proper sitting posture.
- 3 **Eyes level with screen.** A good rule of thumb is to make sure the top of your head is parallel with the top of the screen "top-to-top." Anything less could lead to neck strain.
- 4 **Forearms parallel.** Make sure that your forearms are parallel to the floor and the elbows are at a 90-degree angle. Your forearms should rest on chair arms or on your desk to bear your upper body weight.
- 5 **Shoulder blades settled.** Shoulder blades should be settled on the back of the ribs, not in an arched or hunched position. This includes while talking on the telephone. Use a speakerphone, telephone headset, or cradle/shoulder rest for the telephone handset. These will help prevent unnecessary neck strain.
- 6 **Correct mouse positioning.** Place your mouse near the keyboard so you do not have to reach for it. Reaching for the mouse can over-stretch and fatigue your muscles.
- 7 **Rest the eyes.** Look away from the computer as often as possible and focus on distant objects. Staring uninterrupted at a computer screen for long periods of time can cause eye-strain and headaches. An anti-glare screen can help prevent eyestrain.
- 8 **Take a break.** Take a break from the computer *at least every 20 minutes*.
- 9 **Stretch and move.** Do stretches such as head turns, shoulder rolls, and marching in place while seated.
- 10 **Watch for problems.** Pay attention to warning signs such as headaches, fatigue, muscle pain, or cramping and make adjustments *early*.

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How To Monitor Your Computer Health

A Physical Therapist's Perspective



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Dear Computer User:

Are you finding working or playing on your computer to be a pain in the neck—literally? Neck pain, back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, and many other conditions can result from poor computer workstation habits.

Faulty computer habits can have painful consequences. Sitting too long at the computer without moving around or changing position can result in repetitive motion disorders and muscle strain. Physical therapists recommend that you keep your feet flat on the floor, sit up straight, keep your eyes level with the screen, and take mandatory breaks at least every 20 minutes to avoid muscle fatigue.

Physical therapists may detect early symptoms and develop an intervention program that includes stretching, exercise, and adjustments to the overall work environment. If you or anyone you know is experiencing symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome, neck and back pain, or muscle aches and stiffness, consult a physical therapist.

Computer Position Guidelines

Workstation Tips

Place monitor perpendicular to windows for the best lighting. Draw the shades when the sun is bright.

Make sure the monitor is 18-22" from your forehead, depending on visual acuity. The top of the screen should be at eye level.

Place documents on a copy holder attached to side of monitor or on a copy stand between the keyboard and monitor.

Adjust seat height so that the knees are slightly below hips with feet resting comfortably on the floor.

The keyboard height should be just below your elbow height. The front portion of the keyboard can be raised slightly to prevent bending your wrists up.

If using armrests, adjust the height by resting arm at side with your elbows bent at a 90-degree angle. The armrest should be positioned directly under elbow/forearm.

Posture Tips

Keep your head upright and chin level, keeping shoulders relaxed. Sit as "tall" as possible.

Your arms should rest comfortably at your sides.

Your elbows should be bent at an approximate 90-degree angle.

Your backrest should be mid-pelvis to mid-shoulder blade, with lumbar support from the top part of your pelvis into small of your back.

Keep your hips bent at slightly less than a 90-degree angle.

Keep your wrists straight - not bent up, down, or deviated to the side.

There should be 2-3" between the front of the chair and the back of your knees.

Your feet should rest comfortably on the floor or on a slightly angled footrest.

