

Computer Station Ergonomics - Basic Neutral Position

Ergonomics is the art and science of adjusting a work area to best fit the worker to maintain worker health and safety and improve productivity. Use the guidelines below to adjust your computer workstation to a healthy ergonomic position, and a comfortable fit for you.

Workstation ergonomics: ideal set-up



- Connecting with the Keyboard and Mouse** - Begin by sitting with your bottom as far back in the chair as possible and your back upright and supported by the backrest of the chair. Rest your hands on your keyboard. Adjust your chair so that you can operate your keyboard and mouse while your ears, shoulders, elbows and hips are vertically aligned, your elbows, hips, and knees are between a 90-degree and 120 degree angle and your wrists are reasonably straight, not bent at an awkward angle either up/down or side/side.
- Connecting with the Chair** - Check that your thighs are approximately parallel to the floor and to your forearms. Numerous options are usually available to achieve the proper knee, hip and elbow angles if adjusting your chair alone isn't adequate. Consider a footrest to raise your feet, raising the entire desk, or using a keyboard tray to lower the keyboard to achieve the 90-120 degree hip and knee angle.
- Mind the Gap** - You want a gap between the back of your knees and the front of the chair. Many chairs have a seat depth adjustment, otherwise, a footrest to raise your legs or small pillow between your lower back (lumbar) and the chair to provide additional support and move you forward may help achieve this healthy spacing.
- Low back support** - Your bottom should be as far back in the seat as possible and the lumbar curve of your lower back fully supported by the chair back. Try adjusting your chair back height or lumbar adjustment to see if you gain more support. If more support is needed, bring a small, rolled towel to serve as lumbar support or use a lumbar support pillow.
- Resting eye level** - Close your eyes while sitting comfortably with your head facing forward. Slowly open your eyes. Your gaze should be aimed at the center of your computer screen. If your computer screen is higher or lower than your gaze, either raise or lower or tilt the screen to reduce neck strain. Bi- or tri-focal and progressive lens wearers may require the monitor to be set lower. The monitor should be positioned directly in front of you, not off to the side. The monitor should be as far away as possible where you can still read the print without straining or rocking forward. Multiple monitor set-up will be determined by how each monitor is used.
- Armrests** - Preference for using armrests varies with individuals; many prefer not to use them and can do so safely. When properly adjusted, use of armrests can take some of the strain off your neck and shoulders, and may make you less likely to slouch forward in your chair. To adjust the armrests, position them so that they provide light support without lifting your shoulder or leaning or slumping.

Be mindful of your posture, it is common to have less healthy postures when fatigued; often toward the end of a day or during times of stress. Finally, one of the most important things you can do to stay comfortable and healthy at while working at the computer is to **change your position, even slightly, throughout the day and to take stretch and flex micro-breaks**. If you can't adjust your workstation to achieve a good ergonomic or comfortable position, notify your supervisor, your wellness coordinator, or your campus environmental, health, safety, and risk management department for assistance.

