

Office Exercises

These stretches can relieve both muscle strain and tension within your body. Use caution if you have an injury.

Upper Back & Chest



Shoulder Retraction:

Stand with arms out to the side with elbows bent to 90 degrees. Pinch shoulder blades together and push elbows toward back pockets. Hold for 2 seconds. Repeat.



Standing Back Bend:

Slowly arch your trunk backward. Hold for a count of two. Repeat three times.

Fingers



Finger Stretch:

Make a fist with each hand. Release and spread fingers. Hold for five seconds. Repeat three times.

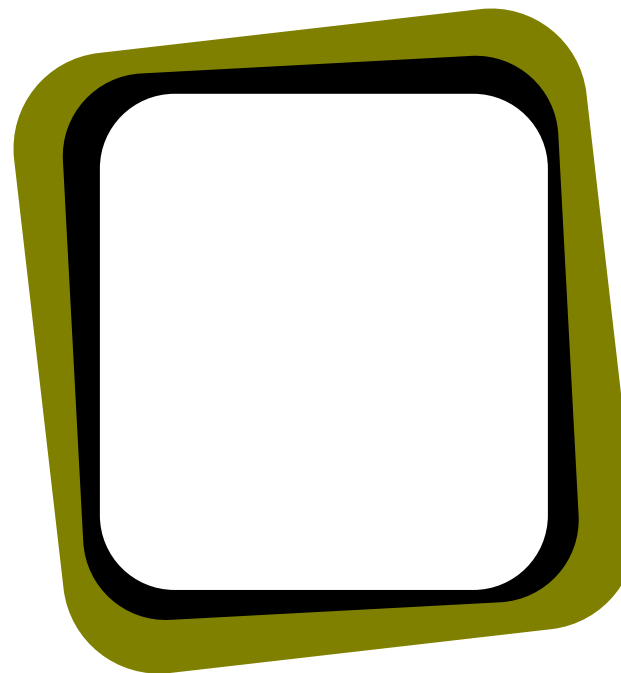
Neck Relaxer



Neck Rotation:

Turn head to either side and look back over your shoulder. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat on other side.

Prevention through Ergonomics



University of New Hampshire
Occupational Therapy Students

Spring 2007
Volume 1, Issue 1

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Our mission is to prevent and reduce computer work-related discomfort and musculoskeletal disorders through education and increased awareness of proper ergonomic practice. This enhanced knowledge and awareness will promote greater physical and mental well-being as well as increased work satisfaction and efficiency.

Working surface

- Stable with adequate space for proper arrangement of computer, keyboard, mouse, and other necessary tools
- If this surface will be used for writing as well as computer work, it should be approximately 28-30 inches above floor level
- Keep it close!
 - Make sure those things that are frequently used are in a position that is within convenient reach
 - Make sure the phone is close to you
- Consider attaching a keyboard/mouse tray that...
 - Is adjustable
 - Allows for arms to be close to the body and in a relaxed position

Document Holder

- Use one! It eliminates the need to repetitively look down at your document and up to the screen.
- Should be positioned so it can be comfortably seen
 - In-line document holder: positioned between the keyboard and screen, at the mid-line of your body
 - Screen-mounted document holder: positioned to the side of the screen (preferably to the side of your dominant eye)
 - Freestanding document holder: positioned to the side of the screen and at a slight angle so that it follows a curve from the side of the screen

Lighting

- Make sure the lighting isn't too bright to create glare from the computer screen
- Appropriate lighting can reduce headaches

These days, it seems as if everywhere you go there are products deemed "ergonomically designed," however, some of the time this is not truly the case. If you are considering buying extra "ergonomically correct" gizmos for your workstation, **consider the following four key questions:**

1. Does the product design make sense? What about the manufacturer's claim?
2. What evidence can the manufacturer supply to support their claims?
3. Does it feel comfortable to use the product for a long period?
4. What do ergonomics experts say about the product?

Ergonomic Workstation Guide

Chair

- Comfortable
- Adjustable seat height that allows feet to rest flat on the floor (or footrest) with knees at approximately 90 degrees
- Backrest that provides lumbar and mid-back support
- Studies show that the best seated position is a slightly reclined position of 100-110 degrees
- Armrests
 - Can be useful for getting into and out of the chair
 - Do not continually rest arms on the armrests while typing and mousing as this can compress some muscles and nerves
 - Should be adjustable

Keyboard

- Positioned so...
 - Wrists in neutral
 - Shoulders relaxed
 - Elbows at approximately 90 degrees

Mouse

- Should be within easy reach
- Should be the same height as keyboard
- Five tips for using a computer mouse:
 1. Use a gentle grip (do not throttle it, its already dead!)
 2. Don't skate or flick your mouse with your wrist, make controlled movements with your elbow at the pivot point
 3. Don't use your mouse by stretching to your desk
 4. Avoid restricting circulation to the hand and fingers by putting too much pressure on the area of the wrist
 5. Choose a mouse design that fits your hand to reduce wrist extension

Monitor

- Top of screen should be at eye level
- Located directly in front on keyboard, not to the left or right to eliminate neck twisting
- Should be 18-24 inches away (approximately arms length)
- Good quality computer screen that reduces glare

Does this sound like something that has happened to you..

You're working at your desk, trying to ignore the tingling or numbness you've had for months in your hand and wrist. Suddenly, a sharp, piercing pain shoots through the wrist and up your arm. Just a passing cramp? More likely you have carpal tunnel syndrome, a painful progressive condition caused by compression of the median nerve in the wrist.

- Carpal tunnel release is one of the most common surgical procedures in the United States. Generally recommended if symptoms last for 6 months, surgery involves releasing the band of tissue around the wrist to reduce pressure on the median nerve.
- Some patients may need to adjust job duties or even change jobs after recovery from surgery.
- If symptoms are reported early, it can be treated conservatively with therapy!

Some Facts...

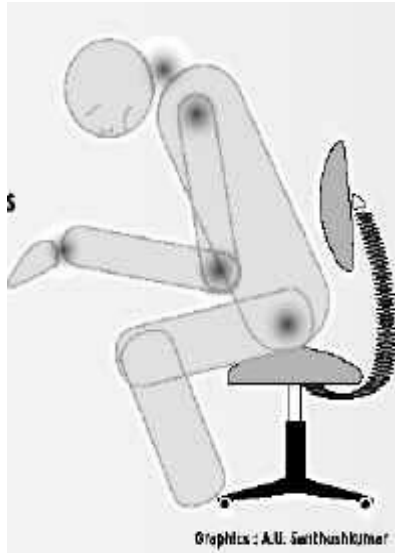
- Approximately 33% of U.S. adults are affected by musculoskeletal signs or symptoms (like the one described above) in a joint or extremity
- More than 5% of adults 45 years or older will suffer from low back pain, tendonitis or bursitis
- Researchers have defined six key risk factors in the workplace for the development of MSDs (injuries that affect muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments or spinal discs): (1) repetition, (2) high force, (3) awkward joint posture, (4) direct pressure, (5) vibration, and (6) prolonged constrained posture
- 15% of the U.S. population suffers from an MSD
- Women are at a greater risk than men for developing MSDs
- 90% of MSDs are preventable

Incentives to Change..

- Ergonomics can have a large impact on the productivity and profits of an organization
- When working at an improperly designed workstation, muscle fatigue, eyestrain, headaches, and other discomforts can become factors in decreasing effectiveness. These factors decrease morale and motivation, and eventually can lead to illness or injury
- Ergonomics can help reduce physical strain and have a positive effect on productivity

Positioning at Your Computer Workstation

Poor Workstation Posture



What is wrong here?

- * neck is bent down to read causing neck tension
- * slouching because subject is not using back rest
- * elbows are bent past 90° in order to reach the keyboard
- * wrists are bent while typing
- * sitting too far forward in the chair to receive proper support
- * hips are at less than 90° because of slouching and seat depth
- * feet are resting on the legs of the chair, knees are bent past 90°

Good Workstation Posture



Why is this an ideal sitting posture?

- * neck is straight while reading the monitor
- * sitting straight up, using the lumbar support of the chair
- * elbows are bent at approximately 90° to reach the keyboard
- * wrists are kept straight while typing
- * sitting far back in chair, back of knees are very close to the chair
- * hips are at 90° because of proper chair use
- * using a foot rest (can be placed on the ground) so that knees are bent at approximately 90°



Neck Bending:

Bend neck to right side. Think of trying to push your left ear up towards the ceiling. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat on other side.

Shoulders



Posterior Shoulder Stretch:

Reach across to opposite shoulder. Gently pull elbow in same direction. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat.



Shoulder Shrugs:

Shrug shoulders upward. Hold for 2 seconds. Lower slowly. Repeat 5 times.

Wrists



Wrist Extensor Stretch:

Keep elbow straight but not locked. Grasp hand and slowly bend down until a stretch is felt. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat.



Wrist Flexor Stretch:

Keep elbow straight but not locked. Grasp hand and slowly pull up until a stretch is felt. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat.

Tips & Reminders

- Changing habits is difficult, but the benefits are worth the effort!
- Check your position
- Stretch
- Ergonomic Equipment
- How valuable is your health?