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DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION



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WORKING WITH OFFICE ERGONOMICS

A practical checklist for ergonomics training in the office can help your employees work more comfortably and efficiently.

Adjust the Chair

- Adjust the height of the chair's seat so that thighs are horizontal, feet rest flat on the floor, and arms and hands are comfortably positioned at the keyboard.
- If the chair is too high, use a footrest. This takes pressure off the back of the thighs.
- Armrests should be adjustable up/down and inward/outward, and padded.
- Adjust the back rest so that it supports the lower back and fits the curvature of the spine. Seat pans should be adjusted for proper slope and comfort.
- Seat cushions should be firm, not soft.
- Utilize chair mat to decrease carpet resistance and provide more maneuverability.

Adjust the Display

- Position the screen to minimize glare and reflections from overhead lights, windows, and other light sources. Place the screen so that windows are not directly in front of or behind the employee when seated.
- Adjust the display so that the top of the screen is slightly below eye level when sitting at the keyboard. The top of the screen should not be above eye level.
- Set the contrast or brightness of the screen at a comfortable level. (This may have to be done more than once a day as the light in the room changes.)
- Where it is impossible to avoid reflections or adjust lighting, an anti-glare filter placed over the screen can be helpful. However, filters may affect the clarity of the image on the screen and should be tried only after other methods of reducing glare have been exhausted. An electrically grounded nylon micromesh glare filter is effective also in removing the static charge from a screen.

Adjust the Lighting

- Draw the drapes or adjust blinds to reduce glare.
- Adjust desk lamp or task light to avoid reflections on the screen. Light sources should come at a 90 degree angle, with low watt lights rather than single high watt.
- The task lighting should not be less than light at screen.
- Reduce overhead lighting (where possible) by turning off lights or switching to lower wattage bulbs.
- Use indirect or shielded lighting where possible.
- To limit reflected glare, walls should be painted a medium or dark color and not have reflective finish.

Adjust the Document Holder

- Position document holder close to screen and at the same level and distance from the eye to avoid constant changes of focus.
- Rotate position of document holder to opposite side of screen periodically.

Work Smart

- Encourage employees to change position, stand up or stretch whenever they start to feel tired. Encourage a soft touch on the keyboard, keeping hands and fingers relaxed, and wrists and body in neutral positions.
- Become aware of other tasks such as manual stapling, sorting through large volumes, and mail sorting where repetition and awkward positions may contribute to repetitive motion injuries. Seek alternate ways to perform the tasks, reduce the load, or rotate jobs.

Consider Posture

- The head should be straight and balanced over the spine while looking forward at the screen. Eliminate the flexed-neck position.
- Elbows should be bent at 90 degrees when hands are on keyboard.
- Wrists should be in a neutral position. Utilize wrist rests at the edge of the keyboard for support. Keyboards should be detachable from VDT and slightly sloped at about 10 to 15 degrees.
- Utilize a back rest for support in lumbar area of back.
- Feet should rest flat on floor or a foot rest should be utilized.