

Are you sitting comfortably?

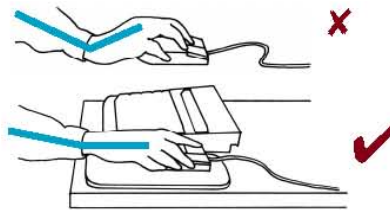
Good workstation design and effective working practices can prevent aches and pains in the hands, wrists, arms, neck, shoulders or back, which may be linked to musculoskeletal or upper limb disorders.

Workstation Design

Workstation design is all about maintaining good posture through an open body position with your joints at an angle of 90 degrees or more. Here are some hints to ensure a healthy position:-

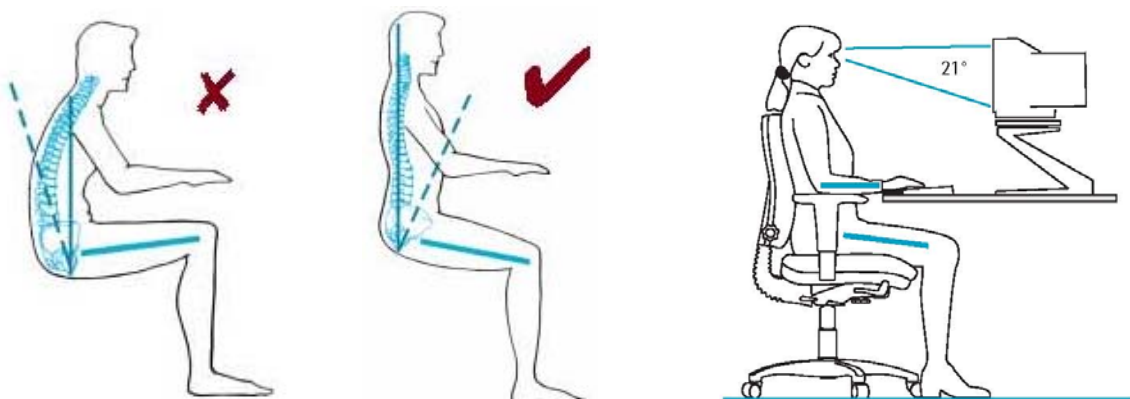
Arm Position

- Forearms should be horizontal with the elbow and wrist in a straight line. The fingertips should drop down slightly to meet the keyboard and mouse comfortably.
- Keep the shoulders relaxed with elbows 'tucked in' comfortably and a 90 degree angle between lower and upper arm.
- Position the mouse and keyboard within easy reach. Keep the mouse close to the keyboard with space for adequate movement.
- Do not rest your wrists on the desk surface or chair arms while typing or 'mousing'. Wrist supports are often not necessary if you are in the correct position.



Sitting Position

- Use a fully adjustable task chair with back and seat sizes suited to your stature.
- Sit well back in the chair to support the pelvis and spine. Hold your head over your shoulders and in line with your hips.
- The seat should be level or tilted forwards slightly*.
- Adjust the seat height so that the knee joint is slightly lower than the hip joint.
- Feet should be flat on the floor to avoid pressure on the back of the knees or thighs. If this is not possible, a foot rest may be needed. Foot rests should be adjustable and large to enable varied positions.



Desk

- Rectangular desks are recommended, rather than curved or wave desks. This ensures the work area is directly in front of the user and avoids working at awkward angles.
- If the desk is too high, use a foot rest so that the chair can be raised to the correct height.
- If the desk is too low, it may need to be raised or replaced with an adjustable one.
- Arrange the desk layout to suit the task and give ease of movement.
- Keep area under desk clear so that legs can move freely.

Equipment

- The screen should be at arm's length with the top of the screen at eye level.
- Place equipment on stands or arms if necessary.
- The screen should be positioned at 90 degrees from any light source to avoid reflections / glare.
- Use a copy holder so that input data is within field of view.
- If you use a telephone for more than 40% of the day, consider a headset.

Working Practices

Simply changing your habits and routines can greatly reduce the risk of developing a health problem:-

- Your body is not designed to be in the same position for long periods of time, so keep moving and change your posture.
- If your chair has a free-float or synchronous motion, use it and ensure that the tension is set correctly to maintain contact with your back.
- Regularly change the activity you are doing and take short breaks away from your desk.
- Avoid quick, repetitive movements, especially when mousing. Break up mousing tasks with other activities and use keyboard shortcuts.

More Information & Advice

Workstation Assessment

If you use a desk for a significant part of the day it is important to assess your workstation. The DSE Assessment is a self assessment, carried out by you with the assistance of your line manager or a member of the Health & Safety Office or Occupational Health Service. More information is available at:- <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/wellbeing/oh/services/displayscreenequipmentdse/>

Furniture Procurement

Tamsin Love in the Estate Development Service can help with advice about purchasing a new chair, desk or other office furniture (ext 5534 or email T.J.Love@ex.ac.uk). More information on furniture is available at:- <http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/be/furniture.shtml>

*Forward tilting seats are not recommended for some medical conditions. If there is any pain do not persist and use the seat in a level position. Initially, vary posture regularly to allow muscle groups to adjust to the new position.