

Musculoskeletal Disorders—Office Workstations

Proper office ergonomics assists in providing a safe and comfortable work environment. The first thing to recognize is that there is no single “correct posture” or configuration that will work for everyone. There are a few basics that can help when setting up a work area for computer related tasks. Many of these principles can be transferred to other types of workstations.



Posture and a neutral body position:

Posture is a very important aspect in setting up a proper workstation. Neutral body position is one of the most important concepts with regard to workstation set-up.

- Neutral body position is the natural alignment of joints, muscles, connective tissues such as tendons, and the skeletal system with minimal effort.
- The intent of a neutral body position is that it reduces the risk of developing a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD).

Workstation set-up:

- Head is level or bent slightly forward, facing forward, and balanced and generally in-line with the torso.
- Head is as vertical as possible. Limit side-to-side head movement.
- Viewing distance is between 20 and 40 inches. The top of the monitor is slightly lower than eye level.
- The monitor is placed perpendicular to incoming light.
- Shoulders are relaxed and upper arms hang normally at the side of the body.
- Elbows stay close to the body and are bent between 90° and 120°.
- Hands, wrists, and forearms are straight, in-line, and roughly parallel to the floor.
- Feet are fully supported by the floor or a footrest.
- Back is fully supported with appropriate lumbar support when sitting vertically or leaning back slightly.
- Thighs and hips are supported by a well-padded seat and generally parallel to the floor.
- Knees are about the same height as the hips with the feet slightly ahead of the knees.

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Make small changes during the day:

- Small changes in working position throughout the day can relieve stress, but care must be taken to maintain a neutral body position.
- Break tasks up throughout the day to allow other muscles and joints to be used.
- Stretch throughout the day.
- Assure that the other components of the workstation support neutral body positioning and allow adjustment, including:
 - The mouse
 - The keyboard
 - The monitor
 - The chair

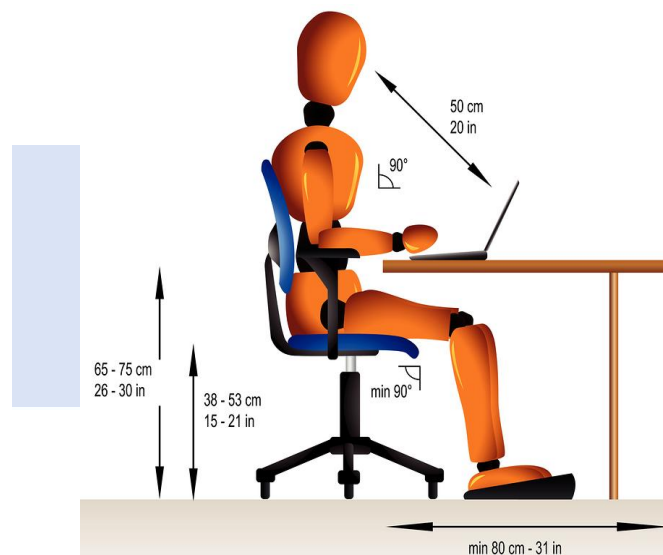


Diagram shows proper posture and seat height at computer work station.