



Fitting your workstation.

With the constant bombardment the press throws at us every day about “new” risks and threats, it is possible to find ourselves overlooking some of the basic risk management considerations, amid all the “noise” from the latest big issue. While neither headline-making nor exciting, managing the basics can result in significant loss mitigation and cost savings. Among the top areas of consideration should be computer work station safety. There is hardly a function that does not involve some computer use.



Most Common Injuries Sustained from Computer Use

- **Backaches, neck fatigue and shoulder or arm pain.** These types of injuries are usually caused when the work station is not properly fitted for the operator and can result in muscle aches in the back, neck, shoulders and arms. Working in this position for extended periods of time can lead to numbness, stiffness and even muscle or nerve damage.
- **Hand, wrist and finger injuries.** Generally, injuries to the muscle, nerves and tendons in the hands and wrists can be directly linked to either improper height of the keyboard, or repetitive movements such as typing or clicking the mouse. Done over a period of years, these injuries can be debilitating.
- **Headaches, eye strain, blurred vision and dizziness.** These problems may be attributed to a screen that is too high or too low, or tilted at the wrong angle, resulting in eye fatigue. A screen that is too dark or does not have enough contrast will cause eye strain, headaches and even dizziness.

While working at a computer can lead to a variety of injuries, the most important thing to do to prevent injury is to properly ‘fit’ the workstation. We encourage you to share the Fitting Your Work Station Checklist, below, with folks in your entity.

Fitting your Workstation Checklist

Working at a computer can lead to a variety of injuries. The most important thing to do to prevent injury is to have your work station fit your body. Consider the following points.

Work Chair

Your work chair should be adjustable and comfortable. The adjustments that should be made are dependent upon your body size. If you are 6’2” you will, of course, require a different chair height than someone who is 5’4”. Your chair should have an adjustable seat height of approximately 16 to 21 inches. Always adjust the seat for the position that is most comfortable for you.



When the chair is the proper height, it is important to remember to sit straight in the chair. Be sure to keep your back flat against your chair to properly support your lumbar region. Do not slouch as this will cause strain to the entire body.

If you share a work station, be sure to re-adjust the chair for your comfort before your shift begins. Ideally, an ergonomic chair is best able to provide the proper support. If a chair does not have a lumbar support or cannot be adjusted to your height, think twice before using it. If possible, ask your supervisor for another chair. If an alternate chair is not an option, try placing a small pillow between the chair and your back for support.

Desk and Keyboard Area

Your desk should have enough space for your monitor, keyboard, computer, document holder and personal items. Ideally, a desk or table should be tall enough to allow a minimum of one inch between your knee and the underside of the table. If you have more than one inch of space between your knees and the table, you may benefit from using a foot rest. A table or desk that is somewhere between 23 and 28 inches tall at the table top is ideal.

Your keyboard should also be adjusted for your use. The angle or slope of the keyboard should be adjusted for maximum comfort. Additionally, consider using a wrist rest pad to avoid straining your wrists.

Video Display

The screen should be placed so that it is just below eye level. Be sure it is properly angled for easy viewing, somewhere between 16 and 20 degrees. If the screen isn't high enough you can raise it up with a book or adjustable tray.

In addition to the information provided, you may want to consider using an outside consultant for a full Ergonomic assessment. Check with your insurance carrier's loss control department as they may have a resource available to conduct an assessment.

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