

# Office Ergonomics - Tips To Stay Comfortable And Healthy

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## What Is Ergonomics

Ergonomics loosely defined at the relationship between you the worker and your environment, or more generally the relationship between people and machines. The field of ergonomics aims to decrease injury, fatigue and discomfort from repetitive exercises such a typing or mouse movements. The list of office related injuries is long and includes neck and back pain, carpel tunnel syndrome and eye strain just to name a few. If you're spending eight hours a day or more at your desk (as we know you are!) you're at risk. So think ergonomics and get smart with your office design.

## Desk And Chair

Your first comfort concerns are your desk and chair. Your desk height, depth and surface material are all important. Begin with your seating position; correctly seated your hips should be slightly higher than your knee; your feet should be flat on the floor or on a foot rest. Check that your legs extend 5 - 7cm beyond the end of your seat pad, this allows your knees to naturally bend. Also adjust your chair back so that it is providing as much support as possible; a chair with lumbar support is recommended.

Correctly seated your desk should be roughly level with your elbows, this allow's your shoulders to relax while working. If you find your desk to be too low, raise it up; if your desk is too high raise your chair and use a foot rest. If you desk is too shallow to allow your elbows to comfortably rest on its surface, either pull the desk away from the wall and fill the space with other furniture or a piece of wood, alternatively invest in extendable arms rests for your desk.

## Computer Monitor, Keyboard, Mouse And Phone

Let's begin with your monitor, if you'll be staring at your monitor for long hours every day we recommend investing in an LCD monitor. LCD monitors result in far less eye strain than traditional CRT monitors; you'll notice the difference right away. Monitor positioning is crucial to ensure a comfortable back and neck. Your monitor should be positioned roughly an arms length away from your eyes, with the top of the screen being level or just below your eye level.

Long periods of typing and mouse movements can cause significant strain on your hands, wrists and fingers. Your keyboard should be placed so that your elbows are close to your body, be careful not to bend your wrists, make sure they remain inline with the rest of your forearms. Invest in an ergonomic keyboard, with a selection of shortcut buttons and a scroll wheel built into the keyboard. This will allow you to do more functions with the keyboard alone. Alternating between the keyboard and mouse scroll wheel can significantly reduce strain. To help reduce strain every further learn the keyboard shortcuts of the programs you most regularly use in your work day.

Finally if you spend more than an hour a day on the phone invest in a headset, if there is no one around to annoy then a speaker phone should do just fine.

## Take Breaks And Exercise.

Just as you would while on a long distance flight, take frequent breaks at least every half an hour. Get up and move around to increase your blood flow, doing little stretches while working can also alleviate discomfort. Stretch your fingers out, roll your ankles, do shoulder shrugs and exercise your

eyes by looking around the room and focussing on objects different distances away from you.

If you experience discomfort from working long hours, go and visit your local G.P or Physiotherapist and get an exercise regime for your work day, don't forget you're working from home now so yoga stretches and start jumps aren't out of the question!