

Sitting Posture

The secret of sitting in a good posture is to encourage the spine to lengthen into a neutral position. This means that the pelvis should tilt forwards allowing the spine to hold its natural 'S' shape and weight should be evenly distributed across the discs, vertebrae and muscles.

The Dangers of sitting

Unfortunately when we are using a keyboard or writing we tend to lean forwards to work. This encourages a slouched posture, which we should avoid. Sitting slightly reclined with the chair tilted backwards and the lower back supported can help us avoid this position.

Changing from a standing to a sitting position makes the top of the pelvis rotate backwards. This flattens the natural lumbar curve of the spine, causing an increased uneven pressure on the discs in the lumbar back. On leaning further forward or slouching causes further pressure on the lumbar discs and extra strain is placed on the back muscles.

Also remember to change your posture to suit the task. Stabilise the lower part of the spine, which in turn controls balance in the upper spine by sitting well back in your chair and maintaining contact with the backrest.

Bad posture

Pelvis forced to lean back.

Strained spine with compression of the lumbar discs.

Restricted breathing, only using upper part of chest.

Stomach compressed meaning poor digestion.

Circulation restricted.

Movement limited.

Muscles elongated in back, slack in abdomen. Imbalance can weaken lower back



Sitting at a computer

Posture

Lengthen spine into its natural position, keeping head held over the shoulders and in line with the buttocks.

Chair

Adjust the height of the chair so the elbows are at desk height or slightly above and the thighs are parallel to the floor with the hip joint slightly higher than knee joint and feet flat on the floor or on a footrest. Sit well back into the chair to support the spine/pelvis but Keep a 2-3 finger width between the back of the knee and the front of the seat (you may need a cushion to allow this.) Tilt seat and backrest backwards slightly to allow comfort. Regularly change posture, to increase blood flow and reduce fatigue.

Desk height

The elbows should rest comfortably on the desk, (forearms parallel to the floor) The shoulders should be relaxed with elbows 'tucked in' comfortably by one's side and a 90° angle between the upper and lower arm. If the desk is too low raise with desk feet, if too high use a foot stand and raise seat height.

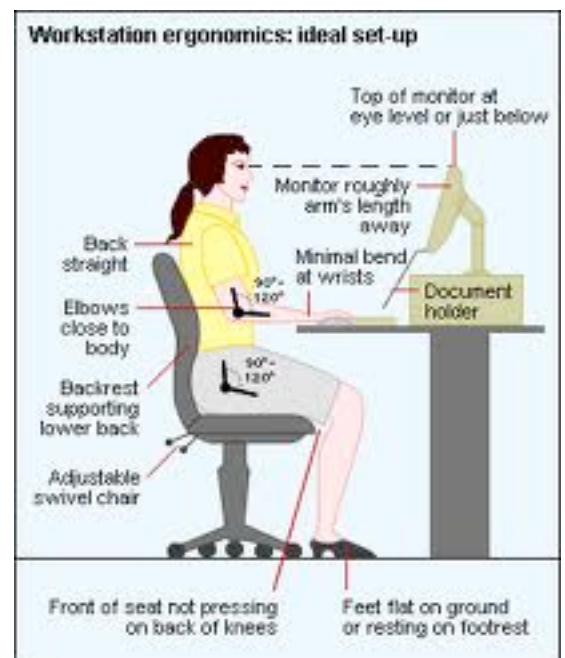
Keyboard

The keyboards should be flat on the desk about 5-10cm from the edge of the desk. Don't rest your wrists on the desk whilst keying, Use a support if required.

Mouse

Place the mouse in an easy reach zone by the keyboard and use a mouse mat. Position the mouse to avoid cable drag and leave space for adequate movement.

The Mouse forearm should be horizontal to the floor. Check that it fits comfortably into the hand. The wrist and fingertips should be in a straight line to the top of the mouse. Try to keep your wrist and forearm inline and move them as one. Avoid constant clicking with the arm straight and fingers tense.



**Screen**

The screen should be at arms length and the mid screen at eye level in front of you. Position the screen 90° to any light source to avoid glare or reflections. Use document holder to input data and ensure it is within your field of view.

Telephone

If used for more than 40% of the working day consider a headset to free hands for more efficient working. Do not place the phone between your ear and your shoulder.

Space

Arrange desk layout to give ease of movement. Use a mouse plate attached to the desk /chair if space is limited in the easy reach zone. Create sufficient room to work especially if multitasking. Place equipment on stands if necessary.

Movement

Prevent static loading. Regularly change position to reduce fatigue. Take breaks and vary tasks.

Laptop Computers

Consider a docking station to ensure correct screen height, use an external mouse and keyboard to avoid excessive reaching. Keep the screen at arms length.

Writing

Raise work using a writing slope. This reduces viewing distance, lessens eye strain and limits the body leaning forwards. Hold the head upright to maintain a balanced spinal posture. If taking notes from a book keep it within the field of view using a book attachment above the slope.