



HARVARD

Campus Services

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY

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Toolbox Talk #5

# COMPUTER ERGONOMICS



Monitor—arms length away with toolbar falling at or below eye level.



Keyboard— Avoid upward bending of the wrist while typing

## Environmental Health and Safety

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Over the past few decades, computer-based technology has become indispensable in most offices. Along with the proliferation of the technology, concern about healthy, safe, and comfortable use of computers has emerged.

### **Symptoms:**

- Muscular Discomfort— pain, aching, loss of coordination, numbness, and stiffness
- Eye Strain— headaches, dizziness, nausea

### **Preventative Ergonomic Guidelines:**

#### • **Monitor Configuration:**

- Depth— The monitor should be arms length away from you while seated.
- Height— The toolbar at the top of the screen should fall just below eye level, this allows the user to view the screen without causing neck strain from repetitive moving.

#### • **Keyboard and Mouse Configuration:**

- Keyboard— The keyboard should be set to a height so your forearms are parallel to the floor and make a 90° to 110° angle with the upper arm. This should allow you to freely type without resting your wrists on ANY hard or soft surface. Most desks require an adjustable keyboard tray to accomplish this.
- Mouse— The mouse should be located on the same plane as the keyboard (keyboard trays should have a mouse caddy to accommodate the mouse). Determine which mouse causes the least strain on your wrist (conventional, trackball, etc).

#### • **Chair Configuration:**

- Depth (Seat Pan)— The seat pan should leave roughly a 2-3 finger space between the end of the seat and the back of your legs.
- Height— The chair should be at a height that allows you to place your feet flat on the floor with your thighs perpendicular to your lower legs.
- Lumbar Support— The lumbar support on the chair should contour and rest against the small of your back.
- Backrest Tilt— The Backrest should be at a 90° to 110° angle when typing.

#### • **Preventative Exercise:**

- Get up and walk around to stretch your legs for a few minutes on an as needed basis.
- Stretch— wrist, arms, and back periodically while at your workstation
- For our online Ergonomic Evaluation please visit our website