



# Safety In The Workplace



## ERGONOMICS AND POSTURE

The term “ergonomics” is derived from two Greek words: “ergon”, meaning work and “nomoi”, meaning natural laws. Ergonomists study human capabilities in relationship to work demands.

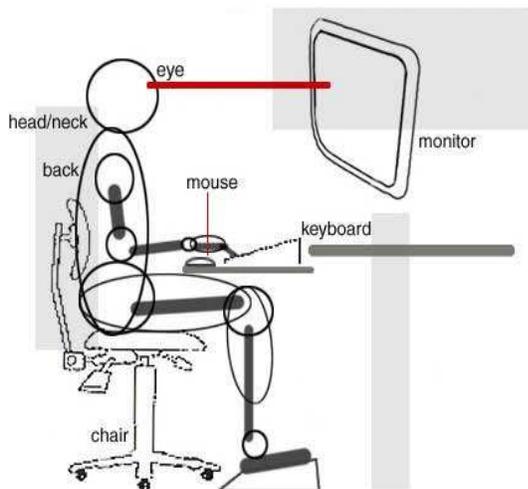
In recent years, ergonomists have attempted to define postures which minimize unnecessary static work and reduce the forces acting on the body. All of us could significantly reduce our risk of injury if we could adhere to the following ergonomic principles:

- All work activities should permit the worker to adopt several different, but equally healthy and safe postures
- Where muscular force has to be exerted it should be done by the largest appropriate muscle groups available.
- Work activities should be performed with the joints at about mid-point of their range of movement. This applies particularly to the head, trunk, and upper limbs.

### Be Ergonomically Correct: Tips for Computer Users

Repetitive and prolonged use of a computer keyboard and/or mouse can lead to muscle aches and discomfort. Try to incorporate the following tips into your work style to avoid problems.

- Sit all the way back in the chair against the backrest. Keep knees equal to, or lower, than hips with feet supported.
- Keep elbows in open angle with wrists in straight position.
- Avoid overreaching. Keep the mouse and keyboard within close reach.



- Center the monitor in front of you at arm's length distance and position the top of the monitor 2" to 3" above seated eye level. You should be able to view the screen without turning or tilting your head up or down.
- Place source documents on a document folder positioned between your monitor and keyboard or place documents on an elevated surface close to your screen.
- Use good typing technique. Float arms above the keyboard and keep wrist straight when keying. If you use a wrist-rest, use it to support palms when pausing, not while keying.
- Hit the keyboard keys with light force. The average user keys four times harder than necessary.
- Customize computer settings. The screen font, contrast, pointer size, speed, and color can be adjusted to maximize comfort and efficiency.
- Reduce glare. Place monitor away from bright lights and windows. Use an optical glass glare filter when necessary.
- Take eye breaks and intermittently refocus on distant objects. Try palming eyes in your hands to reduce eye fatigue.
- Work at a reasonable pace and take frequent stretch breaks. Take 1 or 2 minute breaks every 20-30 minutes, and 5 minute breaks every hour.
- Life style and physical fitness affect how you feel at work. Stay in shape by stretching and exercising regularly.

Source: UCLA Ergonomics Website and University of Texas Website

