**Your Workstation**

Set Up an Ergonomic Workspace

These tips come courtesy of Steve Meagher from ergonomics consulting firm Site Solutions.

Maintain good posture.
- Keep your back straight, forehead level with the top of the monitor.
- Keep your head balanced above your neck and eyes looking directly at the screen.

Place keyboard and mouse:
- Keep your keyboard near or at the same height as your desk.
- Position your mouse so you can use it without reaching or twisting your arms.

Adjust the seat height.
- Keep your thighs parallel to the floor and your feet flat on the floor.
- If this is not feasible, use a manufactured foot rest or other items, such as a telephone book or binder, to raise your foot level.

Adjust the backrest.
- If your chair doesn’t adjust, try using a rolled up towel or small pillow.

Adjust the arm rests.
- To elbow height.

Workstation tips:
- Place frequently used items within easy reach (telephone, mouse, reference materials, etc.)
- Avoid awkward reaching or twisting to access filing cabinets, drawers, books on shelves.
- Maintain appropriate light levels for specific tasks, such as more illumination for reading a document than viewing a computer screen.
- Keep your neck straight for extended use of the telephone. Use a shoulder rest, speaker

**Your Chair**

A chair is one of the most important parts of a good workstation. Adjust yours to support good posture. Here are some general guidelines:

- **Adjust the seat height** so your forearms and thighs are parallel to the floor, and your feet are flat on the floor. If this is not feasible, use a manufactured foot rest or other items, such as a telephone book or binder, to raise your foot level.
- **Adjust the backrest** to support your lower back. If your chair doesn’t adjust, try using a rolled up towel or small pillow.
- **Adjust the arm rests** to elbow height.

**Take A Break**

Change your position! When muscles remain static they fatigue more easily, circulation decreases, you become uncomfortable, and your task gets more difficult.

Stretch breaks:
- Reduce muscle tension from static overload.
- Relieve discomfort from repetitive movements or awkward posture.

Proper exercises complement a complete office ergonomics program. Certain activities can strengthen your muscles and help your body. Choose activities outside of work that will not aggravate existing ergonomic problems.
More and more people spend much of their day sitting at a computer. Generally, people who work more than four hours per day at a computer have a higher risk of upper extremity stress injuries. This is why it is important to use proper ergonomics and arrange your work area to minimize aches, tension, fatigue and other stresses on your body.

**What Is Ergonomics?**

Ergonomics is the science of fitting your work area to your body, not adjusting your body to your work area. Poor ergonomic and individual factors increase your risk of a Musculoskeletal Disorders.

The goals of ergonomics are to provide a positive working environment in which:
- The design of equipment, work layouts and work environments matches the capabilities of people so they can lead healthy and productive lives.
- Differences in job tasks and body sizes among employees are accommodated.
- Job hassle, soreness, and potential injury can be avoided.

**Monitor, Keyboard & Mouse**

Reduce unnecessary stress on your body by following these tips when using a keyboard:

- Keep your forearms, wrists and hands in a straight line.
- Use a padded wrist rest to help maintain a neutral position.
- Use minimum force to strike the keys.
- Position your keyboard at your elbow height when you are seated.
- Place your mouse or trackball next to the keyboard so you don’t stretch to use it.
- Avoid resting your elbows, forearms or wrists on a hard surface or a sharp edges while writing or typing.

**Your Monitor**

Adjust your monitor to provide the most viewing comfort:

- Position the top of the screen at or just below your eye level.
- Adjust the contrast and brightness.
- Use window shades or anti-glare filters on your screen to reduce glare.
- Give your eyes frequent breaks by closing them momentarily, gazing at a distant object and blinking often.

**Your Posture**

The optimal working position of your body is in the neutral posture:

- **Head** centered over the midline of the body when viewed from the back, front, or the side
- **Arms and thighs** parallel with the floor
- **Knees** even with or slightly higher than hips
- **Lowerback** supported

While maintaining your head in its optimal, neutral posture, relaxed vertical and horizontal eye movements can occur up to 35° without significant movement of your head. Using document holders will help you avoid repeatedly twisting your neck.

The neutral posture helps preserve the normal curve of your neck vertebrae, reduces structural and gravitational stress on your spine, and protects your brain stem, spinal cord, and the functions of the attached nerves.

To avoid over use of body parts:

- Alternate between work activities to use different muscle groups.
- Take frequent mini-breaks throughout the day to rest muscles and joints.