

Safety Newsletter



Central Region
School Insurance Group

A quarterly publication for injury and illness prevention

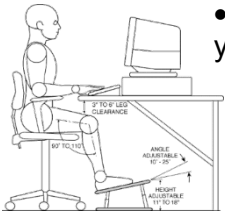
Spring 2024

Setting Up Your Workstation

Ergonomics is a process of fitting the work environment to the worker to provide optimum comfort and avoid injury. It should never be the other way around! You shouldn't have to feel uncomfortable while working at your desk.

Adjust seat to desk

- Adjust seat to person
- Adjust keyboard/mouse
- Adjust monitor
- Adjust primary tasks
- Adjust secondary tasks



- Line up your ears over your shoulders, your shoulders over your elbows and your elbows over your hips. If standing, hips over your knees and knees over your angles.

• Your chair should be adjusted properly to fit your body and assist in maintaining your posture.

- Sit all the way back in your chair and don't slouch. Rest your back on the chair's back rest. This will lessen muscle fatigue as you sit throughout the day.
- Use a foot rest. The foot rest will help push you back into your chair and help you to maintain proper posture.

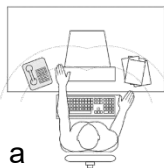
Where is your computer monitor?

- Some employees opt to place their monitors to the left or right side of their desk, requiring head shifted at an angle in order to view the monitor. This will cause neck and shoulder pain. Move your monitor so it is square and directly in front of you.
- Adjust the monitor so that the point, three inches down from the top of the monitor, is at eye level. This may require putting the monitor on a stand or taking the monitor off the stand and placing it directly on the desk.
- If you have multiple monitors, set them at the same height as each other.



Keyboard and mouse

- Keep your keyboard and mouse on the same plane and as close together as possible.
- Place the keyboard and mouse at a height where your elbows would be bent at a 90-degree angle when in use. This is the most optimal position.



- Make sure your elbow is directly under your shoulder and bent at approximately 90-degrees.
- Be sure to place the mouse at the same level as the keyboard

Work and rest cycles

- Sitting for long periods of time is unhealthy and harsh on the body. Try to break up work tasks so that you are getting up from your chair periodically throughout the day.
- Set a timer to remind yourself to stand up, stretch, and move around for a few minutes each hour.

Workstation Exercises

Stretching regularly helps to reduce muscle tension, increase energy, improve circulation and make you more productive! Stretches should be performed 2 - 3 times per day, hold all stretches for 7-10 seconds, switch sides and repeat, stretches can be done sitting or standing.



Neck Stretch. Drop your head slowly to the left, trying to touch your left ear to your left shoulder. Repeat on the right side. Slowly drop your chin to your chest, turn your head all the way to the left, then turn all the way to the right.

Back and Side Stretch. Interlace your fingers and lift your arms over your head, keeping the elbows straight. Press arms as far back as you can. To stretch your sides, slowly lean to the left and then to the right.



Shoulder Stretch. Hold your right arm with your left hand just above the elbow. Gently push your elbow toward your left shoulder. Hold stretch for 7 - 10 seconds. Repeat with your left arm.

Upper Back Stretch. Interlace your fingers and then straighten out your arms in front of you. Your palms should be facing away from you as you do this stretch. Bow the head down and let your upper back round out. Hold for 10 - 15 seconds. Rest. Repeat.

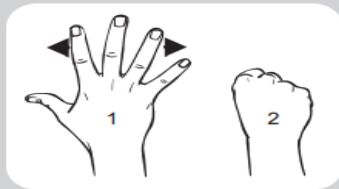


Leg Stretch. Cross your leg and place your foot onto the opposite knee. Keep the knee at a 90-degree angle. Sit up nice and tall and slowly bend at the hip joint and lean forward until you feel a stretch in the outer hip and thigh. Switch legs and repeat.

Stretches to Reduce Risk of Cumulative Trauma Injury to the Wrist and Hand

These stretches can help decrease fatigue and keep your hands flexible:

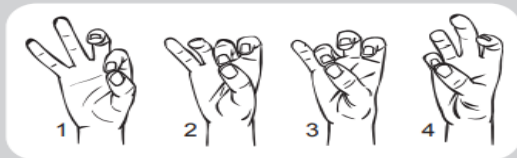
Open your hand and spread your fingers as wide as you can and then close your hand into a fist.



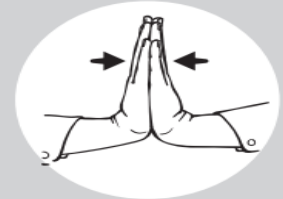
Place your hands flat on the table and lift each finger one at a time for two seconds each



Tap your thumb to each finger.



Bring your hands together with your elbows out into a prayer position to stretch your wrists.



Heat Illness

There are five basic forms of Heat Illness-Heat Exhaustion, Heat Stroke, Heat Cramps, Fainting, Heat Rash.

Heat Exhaustion

Although not the most serious health problem, heat exhaustion is very common. Heat exhaustion happens when a worker sweats a lot and does not drink enough fluids or take in enough salt or both. The simple way to describe the worker is that they are very wet, pale (almost white), and weak.

Signs and symptoms

- Sweaty
- Weak or tired, possibly giddy
- Nausea
- Normal or slightly higher body temperature
- Pale, clammy skin (sometimes flushed)



What to do

- Rest in a cool place
- Drink an electrolyte solution, such as Gatorade or another sports drink. Avoid caffeinated beverages such as colas, iced tea or coffee.
- In severe cases involving vomiting or fainting, have the worker taken to the hospital.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is the most serious health problem for people working in the heat, but is not very common. It is caused by the failure of the body to regulate its core temperature. Sweating stops and the body cannot get rid of excess heat. Victims will die unless they receive proper treatment promptly.

Signs and symptoms

- Mental confusion, delirium, fainting, or seizures
- Body temperature of 106°F or higher
- Hot, dry skin, usually red or bluish color

What to do:

- Call 9-1-1 immediately and request an ambulance
- Move victim to a cool area
- Soak the victim with cool water
 - Fan the victim vigorously to increase cooling

Heat Cramps

Heat cramps are painful muscle spasms. They occur when a worker drinks a lot of water, but does not replace salts lost from sweating. Tired muscles – those used for performing the work – are usually the most likely to have the cramps.

Signs and symptoms:

- Cramping or spasms of muscles
- May occur during or after the work

What to do

- Drink an electrolyte solution
- If the cramps are severe or not relieved by drinking a sports drink, seek medical attention.

Fainting (Heat Syncope)

Fainting usually happens to someone who is not used to working in the hot environment and simply stands around. Moving around, rather than standing still, will usually reduce the likelihood of fainting.

Signs and symptoms

- Brief loss of consciousness
- Sweaty skin, normal body temperature
- No signs of heat stroke or heat exhaustion

What to do:

- Lie down in a cool place
- Seek medical attention if not recovered quickly

Heat Rash

Heat rash, also called prickly heat, occurs in hot/humid environments where sweat cannot evaporate. When the rash covers a large area or if it becomes infected, it may be very uncomfortable. Prevent Heat Rash by resting in a cool place and allowing the skin to dry.

Signs and symptoms

- Rash characterized by small pink or red bumps irritation or prickly sensation itching

What to do

- Keep skin clean and dry to prevent infection
- Wear loose cotton clothing
- Cool baths and air conditioning are very helpful
- Some over-the-counter lotions may ease pain/itching
- Wear shoes with appropriate non-slip soles.

