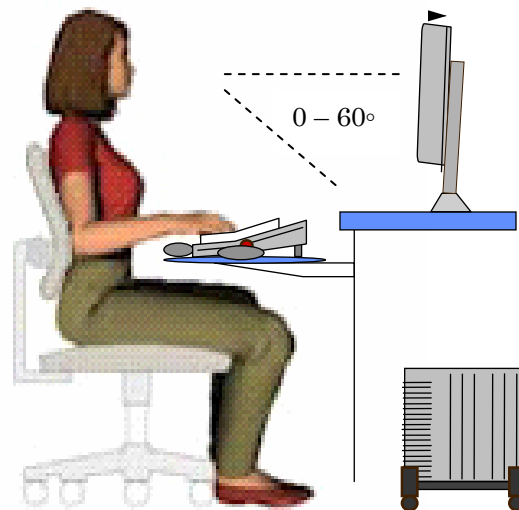


Division of Safety & Hygiene

Properly Positioning Yourself to Work on the Computer



Basic Positioning “Tips” to follow:

- 👍 Monitor and keyboard should be directly in front of you.
- 👍 Input device should be next to the keyboard, so it can be used without reaching.
- 👍 Monitor should be set at your best focus distance to avoid both eye strain and forward leaning. This is typically at least 20 inches away, but varies based on specific vision correction.
- 👍 The top of the monitor (e.g. menu bar) should be at or slightly below eye level.
- 👍 Your head and neck should be aligned with your torso.
- 👍 Your shoulders should be relaxed, with your arms “hanging” at your sides.
- 👍 Forearms and thighs should be nearly parallel with the floor.
- 👍 Your wrists should be in a neutral posture.
- 👍 Feet should be flat on the floor, or supported by a foot rest.
- 👍 Lumbar curve of your back should be resting against (and supported by) the back rest on your chair.
- 👍 There should be approximately a hand’s thickness between the front edge of the chair and the back of your knees.
- 👍 Position your document holder to reduce or eliminate neck twisting or bending.
- 👍 If you need to use the phone and computer simultaneously, then strongly consider using a headset.
- 👍 When using a laptop for extended periods, strongly consider using a docking station and “full-size” keyboard.

Positioning “Tips” Staff Training : Instructor Notes



Monitor and keyboard should be directly in front of you.

- ◇ The purpose is to eliminate static twisted postures for either the employee’s neck or the torso.
- ◇ Performing static work, such as holding a fixed posture, causes the muscles involved to fatigue more quickly.
- ◇ Additionally, holding a deficient posture (i.e. twisting), puts added stress on the joints involved.



Monitor should be at a distance set at your best focus distance to avoid eye strain and leaning forward to read.

- ◇ This is typically at least 20 inches away. Larger monitors (>20”) may require increasing the distance.
- ◇ If the employee has any vision correction, the specific monitor viewing distance should be provided by the employee’s optometrist.
- ◇ The purpose of placing the monitor at the proper viewing distance is to minimize eye strain and leaning forward.



Forearms and thighs should be nearly parallel with the floor.

- ◇ When the employee’s forearms are parallel with the floor, and their arms are comfortably at their sides, deficient shoulder postures can be minimized.
- ◇ When the employee’s thigh is parallel with the floor, there is less tendency to lean forward in the chair, and more tendency to use the chair back support.
- ◇ When the elbow and knee joints are <90°, then blood circulation may be impaired.



The top of the monitor should be at or slightly below eye level.

- ◇ This recommendation is for uncorrected, or most corrected vision. The purpose of this vertical monitor location is to eliminate neck flexion and extension, when viewing the screen.
- ◇ However, employee’s using Bi-focal, Tri-focal or other special prescriptions that are designed for the individual to look through a specific portion of the lens, will have different vertical monitor placements. The individual’s Optometrist should be able to give advice on the specific vertical location.



Your wrists should be in a neutral posture.

- ◇ The purpose is to minimize stress and irritation to the finger flexor tendons, and their lubricating sheaths, as they pass through the wrist (Carpal Tunnel Region).

**Feet should be flat on the floor or on a foot support/rest.**

- ◇ When the employee's thigh is parallel with the floor, there is less risk of mechanical compression (pressure) on the back of the thigh. This type of compression should be avoided because of discomfort and circulation in the lower extremities may be impaired.

**Lumbar curve of your back should be resting against (and supported by) the back rest on your chair.**

- ◇ The purpose is to reduce stress on the operator's lower back.
- ◇ Leaning forward, even slightly, requires the muscles in the back to work at supporting the torso and upper body. This type of static work can cause the muscles being used to fatigue.

**There should be approximately a hand's thickness between the front edge of the chair and the back of your knees.**

- ◇ The purpose is to ensure proper seat pan depth, so that the employee has adequate opportunity to use the chair back support.
- ◇ Additionally, this helps eliminate the need for employees to sit toward the edge of the chair.

**Place your document holder at approximately the same distance (and level) as the monitor.**

- ◇ The purpose is to minimize neck flexion (bending forward) and rotation (twisting) when gazing between the document/material used and the monitor screen.

Consider advising VDT Operators to:

Change position frequently. The best posture for spinal discs is leaning backward with the backrest supporting most of the user's weight. This posture reduces the compressive forces on the discs and reduces the risk for injury. However, because it is stressful on muscles and circulation for employees to maintain one position for a long time, they should be instructed to organize their tasks to allow for position shifts and getting up from their chair. All seated positions should have a torso-to-thigh angle of 90 degrees or more; therefore, a properly designed chair with a seat pan that tilts and a backrest that can follow motions is important.

Not slouch. Slouching puts uneven pressure on the discs, which can lead to a portion of the disc being pushed out to one side (herniated disc). The disc, in turn, may press on the adjacent nerve and cause sciatica. Also, slouching weakens muscles and ligaments, making employees prone to back injuries.

Avoid extreme bending at the knees, such as tucking legs under the chair, and avoid sitting with one leg underneath the buttocks. Such bending can interfere with circulation, irritate nerves, and strain muscles and ligaments.

Minimize time spent with legs crossed tightly above the knee. This position can cause nerve compression, which can lead to numbness and tingling in the legs.

Avoid sitting with large items, such as wallets and notebooks, **in rear pockets**. This can reduce circulation, crowd nerves, and cause unbalanced muscles. Sitting this way for prolonged periods can cause pain and lower-back injuries.

Consider instructing the operator, on the following issues, when using the mouse:

- Hold the mouse loosely, as if you're holding a small bird. And touch lightly, when you click.
- Hold the mouse with all fingers, don't lift your small (pinkie) finger.
- Don't rest your forearm or wrist on the table while you move the mouse.
- Use your whole arm, including the shoulder, to move the mouse - not just your wrist.
- Keep your wrist in a neutral position.