

Ergonomics - Tips for Making Your Workplace Safer

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1. **Work Area:** Make sure that the space is large enough for you to spread out comfortably and allows for a full range of motion, which can be a special concern for those with especially long limbs. Leave plenty of room to arrange the items you use most frequently in such a way that there is no strain for you to reach them.
2. **Laptops:** It is best to use laptops on a table rather than on your lap. If you use it frequently, you might be better served by using a separate keyboard and mouse rather than using the built-in keyboard and touch pad to reduce strain on your wrists and hands.
3. **Keyboard:** If you spend a lot of your workday typing, where you place your keyboard and how you use it can greatly affect your risk for getting RSIs (repetitive stress injuries) like carpal tunnel syndrome. Your keyboard should be placed so that your arms are parallel to your thighs. If your desk doesn't allow for this, try getting a keyboard tray. You'll also want to do your best to use good typing techniques, keeping your wrists elevated and not hitting the keys too hard.
4. **Mouse:** When setting up your desk, make sure to keep your mouse easily within reach and try not to grip it too tightly, as doing so can strain the muscles in your hand. If you find that using a mouse bothers you too much, try using an alternate input device like a trackball or a touch pad.
5. **Desk:** There is no one-size-fits-all desk, so choose one that is right for you. You can help reduce your chance of injury by getting a document holder, arranging your electronics within your reach and making sure that the area underneath your desk remains uncluttered.
6. **Chair:** A good chair can do wonders, as sitting is much harder on your back than it might appear to be. Make sure to keep your lower back supported, and adjust your chair so that you can easily reach your keyboard and mouse. If necessary, get a footrest to help keep your feet from dangling.
7. **Monitor:** Improperly configured monitors can cause a great deal of eyestrain, resulting in headaches and difficulty concentrating. Center your monitor in front of you at a comfortable distance, and adjust the brightness settings so that it's easy on your eyes. Make sure to take breaks from staring at your screen, too. Glare can be a problem as well, and if you can't seem to eliminate it, use a glass glare filter.
8. **Lighting:** Common office lighting can often create a great deal of eyestrain by making your computer monitor difficult to see. Adjust your shades or lights as much as you can to reduce glare, and position your monitor at such an angle to light sources that reflection is reduced. It can be helpful to keep overhead lights dimmed and use a desk lamp for close work.
9. **Work Habits:** You can arrange your work habits so that you don't put undue stress on any part of your body. Make sure to take frequent breaks, get up and walk around, and change positions frequently so that repetitive tasks and static work won't take their tolls.
10. **Phone:** It can be tempting to multitask and cradle your phone receiver between your neck and shoulder. However, this should be avoided, as it can create a great deal of strain in your neck muscles. If you need to have your hands free, try using a headset or put the call on speakerphone.