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Office Ergonomics
Setting up your workspace to reduce muscuskeletol injuries.

Safety Toolbox

Office Ergonomics

What is office ergonomics:

Office ergonomics is the practice of designing and arranging workspaces, tools, and tasks to fit the needs and abilities of office workers. The goal is to create a comfortable, efficient, and safe environment that reduces the risk of physical strain and injuries.

Proper office ergonomics addresses factors such as workstation layout, seating, equipment positioning, lighting, breaks and movement.

By focusing on ergonomics, workplaces can improve employee comfort, enhance productivity, and prevent common issues like back pain, neck strain, and repetitive stress injuries.

Take a moment to ensure your workstation is set-up properly to help avoid ergonomic injuries.

Three main ergonomic principles are posture, workstation setup and movement.

Posture:

- Maintain a neutral posture: Keep your joints aligned to reduce strain on your muscles, ligaments, nerves and tendons.
- Avoid static postures: Holding the same position for too long can cause fatigue and discomfort.

Workstation Setup:

- Keep everything in reach: Avoid unnecessary stretching and strain by keeping items within reach.
- Work at the right height: Use adjustable workstations so that workers can extend their legs to the table.

Movement:

- Reduce excessive motions.
- Minimize pressure points: Avoid excessive pressure points, such as squeezing hard onto a tool.
- Reduce Escessive Force: Use mechanical assists, counter balance systems and adjustable workstations to reduce work efforts.

These small adjustments can make a significant difference in your comfort and long-term health while working.

Occupationl Risk Factors

Occupational risk factors in office ergonomics often stem from repetitive movements, prolonged sitting and poor workstation setups.

Personal Risk Factors

Personal Risk Factors

Office ergonomics are often linked to individual habits, physical conditions and lifestyle choices.

Health Conditions:

Pre-existing conditions like arthritis, diabetes, or hyper-mobile joints may heighten the risk of ergonomic-related injuries.

Fitness Level:

Lack of physical activity or poor overall fitness can increase susceptibility to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

Stress and Mental Health:

High stress levels or poor coping mechanisms can contribute to muscle tension and discomfort.

Posture Habits:

Slouching or maintaining poor posture while sitting can strain the spine, neck, and shoulders.

Typing and work habits:

Repetitive or forceful hand movements, as well as awkward typing styles, can lead to strain or injuries over time.

Laptop Use

Laptop use is on th rise. Laptops have a poor ergonomic design, by combining proper equipment positioning, viewing angles, and typing level, the chances of you suffering from an ergonomic injury is significantly reduced. If you are using a laptop for majority of the day, it must be ergonomically retrofitted which includes: 1) Positioning the laptop directly in front of you, 2) Raising the laptop so your neck is not bent, 3) Using a separate keyboard tray, and 4) Placing the computer mouse at the same level as the keyboard.

Activities to Consider

- Be aware of your posture.
- Give your eyes and body a micro-break of 20 seconds every 15 minutes; look away from your screen and move. Stand-up and move your body for 2 minutes every hour.
- Stretch throughout the day (especially your neck, wrists and lower back).

Office Workspace Setup Checklist

1. Employee should be seated in a neutral position

- ☐ Employee feet are flat on the floor or on a footrest.
- ☐ Employee's knees are at a 90-degree angle.
- ☐ Employee is seated all the way back in their chair.
- ☐ Employee has 2-3 inches between the back of their knees and the front of their chair.
- ☐ Employee has proper lumbar support that fits in the curve of their back.
- ☐ Employee's elbows are close to their body.
- ☐ Employee's elbows are at a 90-degree angle.
- ☐ Employee's wrists are flat in line with their elbows.

2. Workspace setup

- ☐ Chair is adjusted to assist employee with maintaining neutral position.
- ☐ The keyboard is under the palms of the employee's hands.
- ☐ Mouse is next to the keyboard and at the same height.
- ☐ Monitor(s) are at or slightly lower than eye level.
- ☐ Monitor(s) are approximately arm's length (18-24 inches) away from employee when seated or standing.
- ☐ If an employee has a single monitor, it is placed directly in front of them.
- ☐ If employee has two monitors, do they use one more frequently than the other?
    - If yes, place the primary monitor directly in front of the employee and angle the second one to the side.
    - If not, ensure monitors are aligned directly in front of the employee.
- ☐ Space under the desk is free from clutter.
- ☐ Items used most frequently are within the primary or secondary work zones.
- ☐ Headsets are used with phone calls.

Know your ergonomic working zones

You can reduce your risk of musculoskeletal injury simply by arranging the equipment on your desk into these zones.

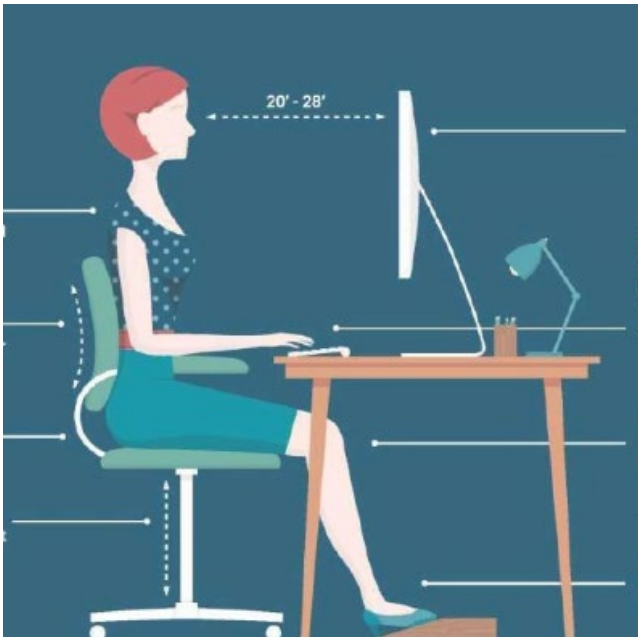
Correct sitting posture

Upper back straight with shoulders relaxed at sides.

Backrest of the chair supports curves in the lower back

Hips as far back on the chair as possible

Adjustable seat for optimal height



Top of monitor at eye level or slightly below

Arms relaxed at sides with upper arm and lower arm forming a 90-degree angle. Wrists straight with fingers relaxed.

Lower legs at 90 -110-degree angle to thighs with adequate legroom above.

Feet flat on the ground or resting on a footrest

Office Ergonomic Evaluation

OFFICE CHAIR		NOTES
Chair Adjustments	Is the employee's chair adjustable? If yes, does the employee know how to use the adjustment features?	
Seat Height	Are the employee's feet flat on the floor or on a footrest? (Employee's knees and legs should make a 90-degree angle)	
Back Rest	Can the employee sit all the way back in their chair? Does the chair provide lumbar support fitting into the curve of the employee's back?	
Seat Pan	Is there approximately 2-3 inches of space from the edge of the seat pan to the back of the employee's knees?	
Armrests	Does the employee's chair have armrests? Does the employee lean on the armrests?	

KEYBOARD AND MOUSE		NOTES
Keyboard Height/slope	Is the keyboard under the employee's palms of the hands? Is the keyboard flat or slightly tilted? (Employee's elbows should be at a 90-degree angle)	
Mouse	Is the mouse next to the keyboard and at the same height as the keyboard?	

MONITOR(S)		NOTES
Height	Is the top of the monitor(s) at/slightly lower than employee's eye level?	
Distance	Is the monitor(s) approximately arm's length away (18-24 inches) from the employee when employee is seated?	
Placement	Does employee have one or multiple monitors? If employee has one, is the monitor positioned directly in front of the employee? If the employee has two, are they centered in front of the employee? Does employee use one monitor more frequently?	

WORK ENVIRONMENT/PRACTICES		NOTES
Under Desk	Is the area under the employee's desk free from clutter?	
Frequently Used Items	Are the items the employee uses most frequently within their immediate reach?	
Micro-Breaks	How often does the employee stand up or change postures?	
Phone Usage	Does the employee use a headset? How often do they use their phone?	

Employee_____ Agency_____ Date_____