

Basic Computer Workstation Ergonomics

Begin with what you've got: assess your current workstation to identify what changes should be made. There is no ceiling when it comes to furniture and equipment so its important to balance cost and benefit before investing in a change.

Firstly think about what you do at your workstation. Do you only use your computer or do you also do handwriting? Do you need space for documents to refer to? Make a list of all the functions conducted at your desk.

- **Desk:**

Is there enough space to carry out all your functions you have identified?

Is it at the correct height for you?

Ensure that the space under the desk is not obstructed.

- **Chair:**

Your chair should support you in a comfortable position with an S-shape spine. Ensure the arch in your lower back is well supported.

Pull the chair into your desk - don't perch on the edge, sit right back into the corner of the seat.

Adjust your chair height so that your forearms are horizontal and your upper arms vertical when you place your hands on the keyboard.

See our advice on office chairs for more info.

Only use a footrest if your feet are not well supported on the floor.

- **Screen:**

The screen must be directly in front of the user. The top of the screen should be at about eye level. A rule of thumb is to have the screen an arm's length away from the user but this will vary from person to person.

Ensure the characters on the screen are easy to read and flicker-free.

Your screen should be free of reflections.

- **Keyboard and mouse:**

Ensure the keyboard is positioned close to you - to avoid reaching.

Ideally, there should be space to rest your wrists when required.

See our advice on ergonomic keyboards and mouse.

Remember, even the most ergonomic desk in the world will not prevent fatigue eventually.

The best way of avoiding the onset of fatigue is to allow rest and recovery through breaking. The best break involves a change of posture. Rather break a little and often than once for a long period. Remember to give your eyes mini-breaks by looking away from the screen frequently.

Lastly, contact your Occupational Health, Safety or Personnel department if you need help or are unsure.