

Health and Wellness News

August 2019

IS YOUR
WORKSPACE
ERGONOMICALLY
CORRECT?



Ergonomics is defined as “the science of fitting workplace conditions and job demands to the capabilities of the working population.” Prolonged sitting in a poorly set up workstation can contribute to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) such as carpal tunnel syndrome, lower back and neck dysfunction, and tendonitis.

You can prevent these conditions by ensuring that your computer workstation is set up properly for your individual body. Here is a checklist that can help you determine if your workstation needs any adjustments.

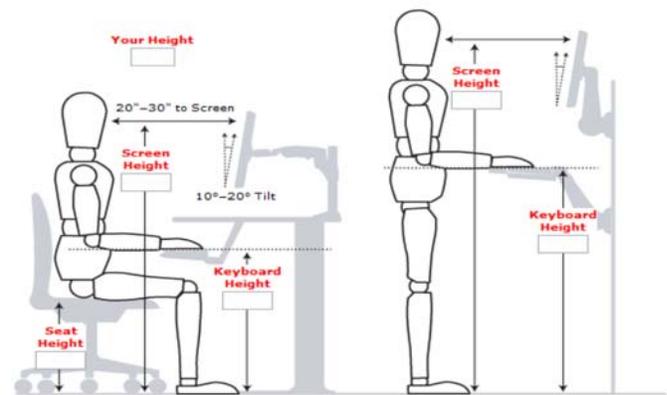
COMPUTER MONITOR:

Monitor sits directly in front of you, not off to one side.

You sit about an arm's length from your computer screen.

The top of your monitor is 2-3 inches above your eye level.

If your monitor is too low, use a stand, books, or a box to raise it to the right height. If it is too high after adjusting it to the lowest position, raise your chair height so the top of the monitor is 2-3 inches above eye level. Use a foot rest if this results in your feet dangling.



CHAIR:

Your chair height now meet the needs of the appropriate height for your monitor as described above.

Your chair height allow for your knees to be slightly lower than your hips.

Your upper and lower back are supported.

If you need to adjust it, go back and re-check the monitor height. If your back is not supported, adjust the chair or use a small cushion for more support.

KEYBOARD AND MOUSE:

Your keyboard is centered directly in front of your body.

The keyboard height allow your shoulders to be relaxed and your wrists and hands to be straight.

Your mouse is as close as possible to the keyboard.

If you need to make adjustments to your keyboard height, you may also need to readjust your chair and monitor height until all three of these are at the right position for you.

Remember, proper positioning will go a long way toward preventing aches, pains, and injuries. It's also important to move as much as possible throughout your work day, since sitting for long periods can reduce blood flow, irritate nerves, and cause micro-trauma to muscles.

TIPS FOR MOVING MORE

Have you heard the phrase, “Sitting is the new smoking?” Studies show that sitting all day can increase your risk of back problems, obesity, chronic diseases, and even shorten your lifespan. Our bodies were simply not mean to be sedentary, yet this is what our modern-day jobs often require. Adding more movement to your day is not that difficult if you just change a few habits. Here are three ways to do so.



SIT-STAND WORKSTATIONS: If a standing desk is an option for you, take advantage of it! But, make sure you’re using it correctly. Aside from chair adjustment, follow the guidelines in the previous article to ensure proper positioning. It’s also important to alternate between sitting and standing every 30-60 minutes (standing all day isn’t healthy either). Be sure to wear supportive, comfortable shoes (ladies, this means flats or low heels).

MOVEMENT BREAKS: Make it a point to get up from your workstation as frequently as possible, even if it’s just for a quick walk, to refill your water bottle, go to the bathroom, go talk to a colleague about a project, or even have a walking meeting. Setting a reminder on your smartphone, watch, or computer will help make sure you get up every hour or so.

STRETCH BREAKS: Stretching is a simple and effective way to prevent muscles from shortening and can be done in about 30 seconds. Incorporate at least 1-3 stretch breaks into your day. There are simple stretches you can even do at your desk. The next article offers some helpful examples.

It’s also a great idea to aim for 5,000-10,000 steps a day!

EXERCISE OF THE MONTH

Workday Stretches



Stretching is not something that is necessary to do only after exercising.

If your job requires you to sit or stand all day, or to do any type of repetitive movements, it is crucial that you stretch your muscles regularly.

Below are a few helpful stretches for different types of workers:

Office workers:

To prevent shortening of muscles in the palm of your hand and forearm, interlace your fingers and turn palms outward, raising hands overhead. To stretch shoulder muscles, lace your fingers behind your back and reach back while squeezing your shoulder blades together. To stretch your torso, rest an arm on the back of your chair and twist your torso in the direction of that arm. Repeat on the other side.

Floor/outdoor workers:

Standing at work all day can lead to leg pain, swollen feet, tight calves, and lower back pain. Strengthen your muscles with these stretches:

Stretch your thighs by bending your leg and grasping your foot behind you and gently pulling up. Maintain your balance by holding on to the back of a chair with your other hand. Repeat on the other side.

Stretch your calves by getting into a lunge position. With the back knee bent, fold forward and gently pull back on the toes of the front leg, holding for a few seconds. Repeat on the other side.

Stretch your lower back by standing with your feet shoulder width apart and leaning forward to touch your toe with the opposite hand. Alternate a few times on each side.

Recipe of the Month

QUINOA AND KALE PROTEIN SALAD

Summer is a great time for salads! This one packs lots of protein, making it a great option for either a complete meal or a hearty side dish. Quinoa is a complete protein and the kale, garbanzo beans, and pistachios offer even more. Serves 3-6.

Ingredients:

- * 2 cups cooked quinoa
- * 2 cups finely chopped kale, ribs removed
- * 1 (15 ounce) can of garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- * 5-6 clementine oranges, peeled and sliced
- * 1/3 cup pistachios (or slivered almonds)
- * 1/3 cup pomegranate seeds (or dried cranberries)
- * 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- * 1 tablespoon honey
- * 1 tablespoon fresh orange juice
- * 1 garlic clove, minced
- * 1 teaspoon dried mint
- * 1 teaspoon sea salt
- * Freshly ground pepper
- * 1/4 cup chopped fresh mint



Instructions:

1. In a large salad bowl, combine the quinoa, kale, garbanzo beans, orange slices, pistachios, and pomegranate seeds.
2. In a small bowl or jar make the dressing by combining all other ingredients, except for fresh mint.
3. Pour the dressing on the salad and toss to coat evenly. Sprinkle with the fresh mint and add more salt and pepper, if needed. Salad can be served immediately or refrigerated for up to 2 days.



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