

With an estimated 3.5 million working days lost in 2006-7 due to RSI (costing employers almost £300 million per year)*, it's vitally important that all workers are working ergonomically to prevent Upper Limb Disorders.

*Source: Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, www.csp.org.uk

1. Move the chair close to the desk and sit back on the seat. Adjust the chair back so that the upper body is relaxed and supported. Raise the chair seat so that, with the upper arms vertical, the elbows are level with or just above the desk.

Sitting with the chair too low and too far from the desk encourages a slouched posture with no support from the chair back. The head is tilted forward. Feet are hooked around the chair base restricting blood circulation in the legs. Shoulders may be hunched.

2. Set the chair position and height as described above. Use a foot rest if the feet do not touch the ground. Height-adjustable chair arms provide additional support for the upper body when not keying. If the armrests restrict desk access, consider removing them altogether.

Shorter people often set the chair height so that their feet are firmly on the floor. If this is too low for the desk, it is likely to result in arms stretched forwards (or sideways) and/or shoulder lifting. This causes undue muscle tension.

3. **Touch typists** can raise the monitor so that the visible screen top is just below eye level. Any document holder should be at screen height and in the same focal plane to minimise head twisting and tilting. **Copy typists** may prefer the screen to one side and the document holder directly in front. **'Hunt and Peck' typists** who need to look at the keyboard may want to position the monitor lower to minimise "nodding" between the two. The document holder should be placed between the monitor and keyboard to avoid twisting.

If the monitor is set too low, this encourages the operator to tilt the head downwards. As a result, the whole body tends to lean forward, moving away from the support of the chair back and encouraging slouching.

4. Arrange your desk layout to make best use of available space. Use your mouse (or trackball) close to the keyboard. Document management is very important. If you need to look at the keyboard when typing, the best place for the document holder is between the monitor and the keyboard. Other tools, such as the telephone, should also be readily accessible without stretching and twisting. If you write whilst using the telephone, hold the handset with your "non-writing" hand. A headset will dramatically improve comfort and convenience.

You will not be able to benefit from these instructions unless you know how to adjust your chair. If you are unfamiliar with the controls, consult your Health & Safety Advisor or chair supplier.



A good posture



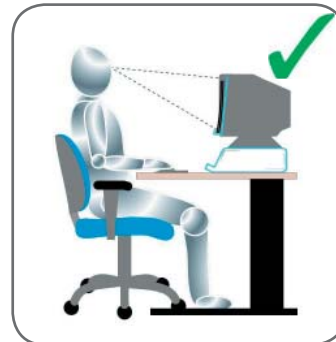
Slouching at the desk



Foot rests provide a comfortable position



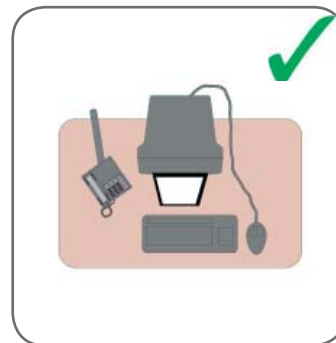
Arms stretched, shoulders lifted.



Screen at the correct ergonomic height



Straining the body to look downwards at the screen



Everything easily reachable and organised



Monitor and keyboard angled causing twisting

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5a. Make sure there is a comfortable viewing distance between your eyes and the screen and have some space between the keyboard and the front of the desk. With traditional monitors, you may need to move the desk away from the wall (or the desk behind) to create sufficient screen distance. Place the screen in front of you so that you face it without twisting your body. Ensure your legs are not obstructed by any drawers under the desk. If your PC is occupying too much desk space, move it off the desk. If you are not a touch-typist, you may also like a wrist rest for support when you are not typing.

5b. If you do not use the numeric keypad extensively, consider a mini keyboard. This brings the mouse/trackball much closer to you on the right and can reduce muscle tension significantly.

6. Clear the space under the desk so that you can place your legs underneath it without twisting or leaning forward. If the drawers or pedestal are free-standing or detachable and you have sufficient space, create further leg room by moving them clear of the desk.

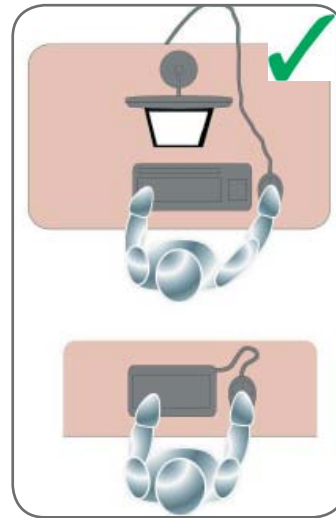
Laptop Users - Special Notes

7. A separate keyboard and mouse will make a significant improvement to layout flexibility. By using one of the proprietary laptop stands to tilt the computer, it is also possible to raise the screen to an acceptable height and viewing distance.

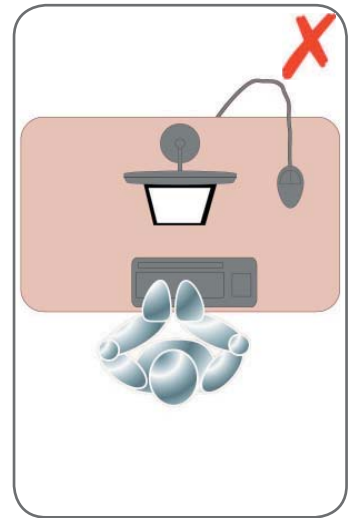
Laptop use is a major source of musculo-skeletal problems. Using a laptop on its own for any length of time will inevitably cause poor posture which in turn is likely to lead to head, neck and/or back pain.

Avoid sustained static postures. Remember that even appropriate postures become inappropriate when maintained for too long.

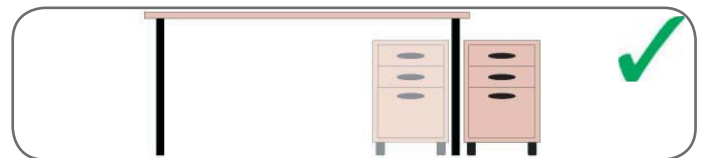
These drawings illustrate the most common posture problems and solutions to them using standard rectangular workstations. They are for guidance only and will suit the majority of situations. The products illustrated are representative rather than definitive (foot rests, for example, will not always be necessary). Corner or shaped desks may require slightly different configurations. Best practice will depend upon the needs of the individual and the nature of the activities involved.



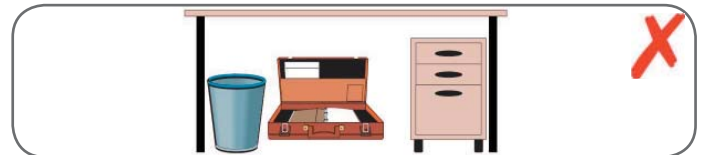
Using a mini keypad brings the mouse closer



A normal keyboard pushes the mouse far to the right



Ample leg room beneath the desk



A cramped desk space creates discomfort



Separate accessories create a comfortable working position



Hunched and uncomfortable laptop working