What is Ergonomics?

Ergonomics is the scientific analysis of the relationship between the worker and work environment. An ergonomic program is intended to optimize worker efficiency by matching worker capabilities and limitations to the work task. Basically, ergonomics is to fitting the job to worker—not the worker to the job. The end result is to make work more comfortable, improve worker health and productivity and reduce injury potential.

Ergonomic Related Injuries

An ergonomics program is intended to reduce work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSD's). WMSD's can affect muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves, joints and spinal discs. Common types of WMSD's are cumulative trauma disorders (CTD's), repetitive stress injuries (RSI's) and repetitive motion injuries (RMI's) as well as acute injuries such as muscle/ligament/tendons strains, sprains and tears.

Office Ergonomics

In an office environment, the primary focus of an ergonomics program is the computer workstation (desk, chair, keyboard, mouse, monitor, phone). The most common risk factors for injury are repetition, awkward and static postures and contact stress.
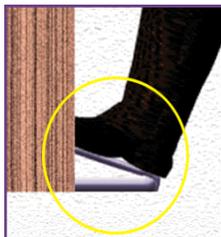
The most effective way to combat ergonomic related injuries is to establish and implement a control program, which should contain, at a minimum, the following three principle components: (**1**) Written Policies; (**2**) Workstation Evaluation & Correction; and (**3**) Training.

Proper Workstation Ergonomics

To assist you in creating proper workstation ergonomics, please see the following figures that provide suggested ergonomic management techniques.

Foot Support	Seat Height
♦ Lower your chair until you feel the floor supporting your feet. ♦ Maintain proper orientation to the keyboard/mouse. If not possible, obtain a footrest.	♦ Raise or lower your chair seat until your thighs and buttocks are evenly supported. ♦ If raising your chair, make sure your feet remain supported. ♦ If your chair doesn't adjust low enough, use a foot rest.

Leg Room

- An articulating (adjustable) keyboard tray may provide more thigh clearance.
- Lower your chair.
- Raise your work surface.
- Clear out materials, wires, equipment, and papers stored within your leg space.
- Move your computer away from credenzas or other inhibiting furniture to an area with sufficient leg clearance.

Seat Depth

- If possible, adjust your chair seat depth so you can sit fully back in your chair. Sometimes this is accomplished by moving the seat back and forth, and sometimes by repositioning the back of the chair.
- Obtain a lumbar accessory that will position you farther forward in your chair and still provide good back support.

Lumbar Support

- If possible, adjust the back of your chair to reposition the lumbar area to better fit your lower back.
- Use a lumbar support (cushion or pillow).

Relaxed Shoulders

- Adjust the armrests on your chair so your arms are gently supported.
- Adjust the height of your keyboard, mouse or other input devices to closely match your seated elbow height.

Arms by Your Side

- Relocate your keyboard and mouse so you can reach them with your upper arms relaxed by your side.
- Sit closer to your keyboard and mouse. This may require you to adjust your armrests, work surface height, and other equipment. Make sure you maintain adequate thigh clearance.
- If your armrests get in the way and are not adjustable, consider having them removed.
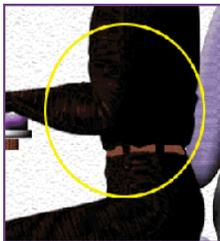
Keying

- Adjust your chair or keyboard tray so your wrists and forearms are in a neutral position, where forearm, wrist and hand form a straight line.
- Install an articulating keyboard tray.
- Obtain a wrist rest.
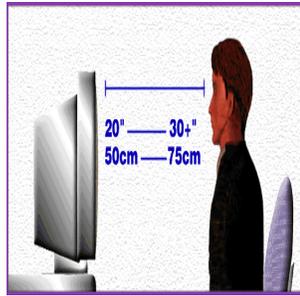- If the arms of your chair are too high to permit a neutral posture, adjust or remove them.

Monitor Position

- Move your monitor directly behind your keyboard.
- Consider placing the copy directly behind your keyboard and the monitor slightly off to one side.
- Identify the place on your monitor that you see first. This should be approximately 2" from the top of your display area (not the top of the monitor).
- This is your natural gaze angle, where your most commonly viewed materials should be placed for maximum comfort. Based upon your results, arrange to move your monitor higher or lower to achieve the recommended neck posture.
- Use a copy holder which accommodates the printed material you are reading (e.g., double wide or extra sturdy for heavy items).
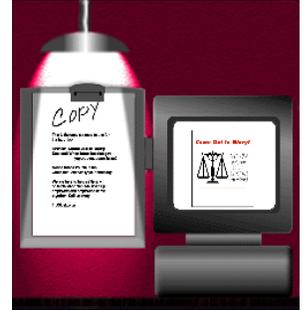- Position copy within easy view.
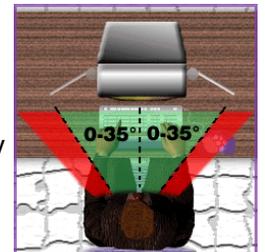
| Viewing Distance	Lighting
• Adjust your viewing distance so there is at least 20" between you and your monitor. • Make sure you can clearly see the characters on your monitor. • Adjust your monitor brightness and contrast settings to display characters clearly.	• Reduce background lighting to a level suitable for reading the monitor. • Add task lighting where more illumination is required to read printed materials.
Phone Use	**Keying Technique**
• If you infrequently cradle the phone between your head and shoulder, consider attaching a phone hand cradle. • If you frequently cradle the phone between your head and shoulder, consider obtaining a phone head set.	• Develop a "light" touch when keying and using the mouse. • Enlist the aid of a coworker to help you notice when you are "attacking" the keys. • Be especially watchful when working in a stressful situation, such as working under a deadline. • Shake your hands, stretch, or massage them to relax your fingers and hands.

Mini-Breaks and Stretching

- Alternate tasks during the day (e.g., from keying to copying to making phone calls, etc.).
- Schedule **mini-breaks** throughout the day of 15 to 30 seconds every 15 to 30 minutes by getting up from your desk and walking around your office.
- **Performing stretches** of hands, arms and shoulders during these mini-breaks provides additional benefits.
- Incorporating movement into your day improves circulation and helps prevent fatigue and discomfort.
- See below for a few sample stretching exercises:
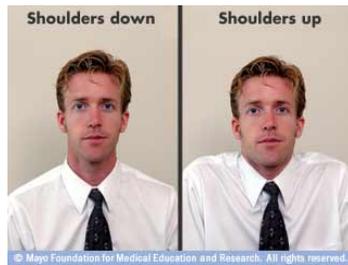
Shoulder Stretch   Executive Stretch   Side Neck Stretch   Chin Tuck

Head Turn   Back Stretch   Hand Stretch

For more information on, or assistance with creating, an ergonomics program please contact the Lyons Risk Control Department.

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