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### 4 Steps to Setting Up Your Computer Workstation

#### STEP 1: Your Chair - see attached picture of "proper work station" In addition:

1. **\_\_Push your hips as back as far as they can go in the chair.**
2. **\_\_Adjust the seat to the height** that places your feet flat on the floor and your knees even with, or slightly lower than, your hips.
3. **\_\_Adjust the chair back to 90 -110° reclined angle.** Make sure your upper and lower back are supported. Use inflatable cushions or small pillows if necessary. If you have an active back mechanism on your chair, use it to make frequent position changes.
4. **\_\_ Try different set ups that will provide support for your forearms – so that your arms are not left unsupported. If available - adjust the armrests so that your forearms are slightly supported, your shoulders are relaxed.** If do not have armrests push your computer set up forward so you can rest your forearms on the desk top. Practice relaxing your shoulder muscles while working with your arms gently supported.

#### STEP 2: Your Keyboard

Your keyboard tray should hold the **mouse**, provide **leg clearance**, and optimally have an adjustable height and tilt mechanism. **Most of all**, the tray should be at a height that positions you arms with 95-110 degrees at the elbow. Also the tray should not push you too far away from other work materials such as your telephone.

1. **\_\_Pull your chair up close to your keyboard.**
2. **\_\_Position the keyboard directly in front of your body, not to one side or the other.**
3. **\_\_Determine what section of the board you use the most**, and readjust the keyboard so that it is directly in front of your body.
4. **\_\_Adjust the keyboard height** so that your shoulders are relaxed, your elbows are in a slightly open position (95-110 degrees), and your wrists and hands are straight.

**Wrist rests can help to maintain neutral postures and pad hard surfaces.** However, the wrist rest should only be used to rest the palms of the hands between keystrokes, not while typing is not recommended. Avoid using excessively wide wristrests, or wristrests that are higher than the space bar of your keyboard.

If you do not have a fully adjustable keyboard tray, you may need to adjust your workstation height, the height of your chair, or use a seat cushion to get in a comfortable position. Remember to use a footrest if your feet dangle.

#### STEP 3: Monitor, Document, and Telephone

Incorrect positioning of the screen and documents can result in awkward postures. Adjust the

monitor and documents so that your neck is in a neutral and relaxed position.

1.  **Center the monitor directly in front of you** above your keyboard.
2.  **Position the top of the monitor approximately at eye level or 2-3" above** .  
(If you wear bifocals, lower the monitor to a comfortable reading level.)
3.  **Sit at least an arm's length away from the screen** and then adjust the distance for your vision.
4.  **Reduce glare by careful positioning of the screen.**
5.  Place screen at **right angles to windows**
6.  **Adjust curtains or blinds** as needed
7.  **Adjust the vertical screen angle** and screen controls to minimize glare from overhead lights
8.  Position documents **directly in front of you, between the monitor and the keyboard, using an in-line copy stand**. If there is insufficient space, place documents on a document holder positioned to the side of the monitor.
9.  **Place your telephone within easy reach**. Telephone stands or arms can help.
10.  **Use headsets and speaker phone** to eliminate cradling the handset.

#### STEP 4: Pauses and Breaks

Once you have correctly set up your computer workstation use good work habits No matter how perfect the environment, prolonged, static postures will inhibit blood circulation and take a toll on your body.

1.  **Take short 1-2 minute stretch breaks every 20-30 minutes**. After each hour of work, take a break or change tasks for at least 5-10 minutes. Always try to get away from your computer during lunch breaks.
2.  **Avoid eye fatigue by resting and refocusing your eyes periodically**. Look away from the monitor and focus on something in the distance.
3.  **Rest your eyes by covering them** with your palms for 10-15 seconds.
4.  **Use correct posture** when working. Keep moving as much as possible.

#### Complete this checklist to determine if you use proper techniques when working at your computer.

##### Posture:

1.  Are you **sitting against the back of your chair** while you work?
2.  Is your head/neck **upright and centered** over your shoulders when you look at the screen or documents?
3.  Are your **shoulders relaxed** when keying and using the mouse?
4.  Are your arms **close by your sides** when you use the keyboard or pointer?
5.  Are your wrists in a neutral position (aligned with your forearm) when keying or using the pointer?
6.  Are you **avoiding awkward postures** such as an extended finger or thumb when keying or using the pointer?

##### Work Techniques:

1.  Are you using a **light touch** to key?

2. \_\_\_Do you avoid leaning on the wrist rest while keying and mousing?
3. \_\_\_Are you **holding your mouse loosely** with your hand and fingers in a relaxed position?
4. \_\_\_Do you **let go of the mouse** when not using it?
5. \_\_\_Do you **take 20 second breaks** after every **20 minutes of keying**?
6. \_\_\_Do you take **eye breaks** and look at a distance every 20 minutes?
7. \_\_\_Do you **blink** while you look at the screen?
8. \_\_\_Do you take **stretch breaks** throughout the day?
9. \_\_\_Have you set up your work to encourage **alternating sitting and standing** throughout the day?
10. \_\_\_Have you optimized your settings on your computer to make your work easier? (i.e. flicker rate, mouse speed, font size)

Information adapted from UCLA Ergonomics, **Environment, Health and Safety Ergonomics Program**, Los Angeles, CA **AND Diagnosis and Treatment Manual for Physicians and Therapists**, Fourth Edition, Hand Rehabilitation Center of Indiana.