

UNCW Office Ergonomics

Ergonomics is the study of how to adapt jobs to the people who perform them. To stay safe and healthy on the job, everyone must move, lift, sit and perform various tasks in ways that do not result in what are called musculo-skeletal injuries (MSDs).

The University of North Carolina Wilmington's (UNCW) program is taken from information provided by the *North Carolina Ergonomics Resource Center* www.theergonomicscenter.com, for the purpose of making employees conscious of how they are working. Even using "ergonomically fit" equipment, chairs, and workstations, employees' need to be sure they are working in the best manner possible and doing what is best for their body by reducing stressors in work methods.

WORKSTATION:

When setting up your workstation and job materials, items used most frequently (many times during the day) should be placed within immediate forearm reach. Items used less frequently (once or twice a day) can be within a full arm's reach. Those items seldom used (once or twice a week or less) may be placed farthest away.

Properly Adjust Your Workstation:

- **Adjust the chair height so that the elbows are the same height as the work surface (keyboard tray or desk)**
- **If the feet do not touch the floor at this chair height, obtain a footrest to support the feet while sitting**
- **Adjust the chair backrest height so that the round part of the backrest fits into the lumbar curve of the spine**
- **Adjust the chair armrests so that they are slightly lower than the elbows. If the armrests cannot be adjusted and tend to confine the arms, have them removed**
- **Place the keyboard and mouse as close together as possible, at the same height and depth.**
- **Place the keyboard and mouse directly in front of the body, within forearm reach.**
- **Adjust the height of the monitor so that the top row of characters is at eye level. For bifocal wearers, lower the monitor further to minimize neck bending**
- **Adjust the tilt of the monitor downward to minimize glare from overhead lights if it is a problem**
- **Place the monitor about arm's length away from you**
- **Place the document holder at the same height and depth as the monitor screen**

REST BREAKS:

Computer work for long periods of time can cause muscle fatigue and dry eyes. The best way to reduce the discomfort is to take short breaks frequently during the day. Stand up and move around. Even incorporate some simple stretching exercises during your breaks. These breaks promote muscle improvement, blood circulation, and significantly reduce fatigue and discomfort. A good rule of thumb is to take thirty (30) second breaks every twenty (20) to thirty (30) minutes.

Call Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) (ext. 3057) for an ergonomic evaluation for your specific work area.

Reviewed/Revised April 2005