

Workstation Design Tips - Is Your Health at Risk?

An Interior Concepts White Paper

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You are probably aware that the angle of your computer screen or the way you type on your keyboard can dramatically affect your health; but do you know what ergonomics really means or how to create an ergonomic work area? Ergonomics essentially means designing the workplace to maximize productivity by reducing fatigue and discomfort. With most people spending the majority of their workday at a computer, it is essential to have a properly designed ergonomic work area to maintain good health. This white paper will help you to learn how to create a workstation that will enable you to be more productive, comfortable, and healthy.

After you review this white paper, take a look around your office and see how people actually work. Chances are that they are not working in a proper ergonomic position.

Adjustable Keyboard Mechanism

Keyboards are an essential part of the ergonomic work environment. It is commonly known that correct keyboard positioning and use can help to decrease carpal tunnel syndrome and make working at a computer workstation more comfortable. The keyboard should be located at a height that allows the upper arms to hang relaxed from the shoulders, and the elbows at roughly right angles, allowing the wrists to be fairly straight. Regarding tilt, the keyboard tray should have a slight negative tilt to keep wrists in a neutral posture.



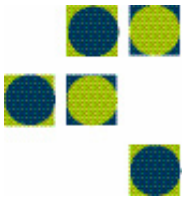
Seating

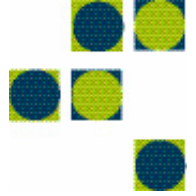
If you have ever sat in an office chair for hours at a time you know that selecting a comfortable ergonomic chair is an integral part of a workstation. While working at a computer, proper position is to sit reclining slightly so that the chair fully supports the back. This posture will help to minimize back discomfort. Studies have shown that the best seated posture is a reclined posture of 100-110 degrees, and not the upright 90 degree posture that was portrayed in the past. Without a properly adjusted chair, the benefits of existing ergonomic tools may be compromised.



Adjustable Height Workstation

If you can, take advantage of standing height mechanisms. The most ergonomically correct workstations encourage individuals to change positions frequently and easily. With the correct tools, standing is as simple as sitting. A height adjustable work-surface is one way to move from a sitting to standing working position. Another, perhaps easier way, is to use a keyboard tray and monitor arm with enough adjustment to be used while in a standing position.





Adjustable Monitor Arm

A monitor should be front and centered at a comfortable viewing distance. A properly positioned monitor will offer improved comfort and reduced muscle and eye strain. Utilizing a flat screen monitor arm will allow the monitor to be custom placed to promote proper ergonomic positioning, sitting with the back fully supported by the chair while reclining slightly, and arms and wrists in the correct position to use the keyboard tray. If you have to lean forward to view the monitor it is not properly placed!



Foot Rest

A footrest may not seem like a key ergonomic accessory, but incorporating a footrest does provide some great ergonomic benefits. Since a footrest rocks it promotes movement. Movement can help decrease circulation problems that can happen due to long periods of inactivity, such as blood clots. It also supports the legs, which can relieve pressure from the lower back, or help to support the legs for a shorter user.



Task Lights

According to OSHA, studies estimate that 90% of the U.S. workforce using computers for more than 3 hours per day, experience CVS (computer vision syndrome) in some form. Task lighting can reduce CVS symptoms including eyestrain, headaches, and fatigue. Task lighting may also reduce dilation of eyes between tasks, which will reduce eyestrain.



Properly Adjusted Ergonomic Accessories

Adjustability is a key part of ergonomics, however, people may adjust themselves into bad postures and positions. Proper training is key to keeping people from putting themselves at risk. A great site for free ergonomic information is OSHA (the Occupational Safety and Health Administration). OSHA offers an Ergonomic E-Tool for Computer Workstations. The page goes over proper positioning of the entire body while working at a computer workstation.

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/computerworkstations/index.html>



Interior Concepts specializes in designing, manufacturing and installing high quality furniture for call center environments. We have been manufacturing furniture for call centers for over 20 years, so we know how to solve the specific design challenges of the contact center environment.

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