

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Office workstations

Working at a computer in awkward positions or for long periods can cause pain, discomfort and injury, which are typically sprains and strains in the neck, back, shoulders, wrists and hands.

In order to minimise these risks, it is important to have a good workstation design, layout and setup as well as having a variety of tasks and opportunities to move around throughout the day.

Things you can do

Making a few small changes can significantly reduce your risk of injury. Discuss with your supervisor if you are having problems with your workstation setup or are unable to make any of these changes.

Workstation setup

- Before you start work check that the workstation is set up to suit you and your tasks for the day.
- Position the monitor so that you do not tilt/arch your head or back or twist your neck.
- Position your keyboard directly in front of you. Push the keyboard back so that your forearms are supported on the front part of the desk when keying. Touch typists may prefer to position the keyboard closer to them.
- Have enough space so that your keyboard and mouse can be comfortably used on the same level of the desk surface.
- Position your arm close to your side when using the mouse (ask a workmate to check).

- Use a document holder if you refer to documents when typing.
- Keep all frequently used items within easy reach.

Seating

- Choose a chair you can sit in comfortably. Chairs can be ordered in different sizes.
- Adjust your chair to suit you, including the lumbar support and backrest and the seat height and tilt.
- Sit closely to the desk (remove fixed armrests if they stop you from doing this).

Laptops

- Laptops are designed for short term or mobile use. When using a laptop for long periods, use a separate full sized keyboard, mouse and monitor.

Work practices

- Look at ways to change your posture and encourage movement, for instance locate the printer and photocopier so that you have to walk to them and choose to do filing after a period of typing.
- Get involved in discussions about your workstations, equipment and furniture and participate in trialling equipment and furniture before it is purchased.
- Report any faulty or broken furniture or equipment to your supervisor.
- Remember, everyone is responsible for workplace health and safety.

More information

Visit www.worksafe.qld.gov.au or call the Workplace Health and Safety Infoline on 1300 369 915.

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