

live well, work well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home, and life—brought to you by the insurance and healthcare specialists at Trapani Dickins and Associates Employee

# Posture: Office Ergonomics

The key to preventing work-related neck and back injuries is to evaluate your workstation and make sure it is ergonomically correct and promotes good posture. The discomfort and pain from slouching at a desk all day is very real, with one in every three office workers suffering pain at least once a week. If you are working at an ergonomically incorrect workstation and practice poor posture, you can suffer from neck, shoulder, wrist and elbow discomfort.

## Good Posture Tips

There are two ways to help promote good posture at work:

- Focus on your posture itself.
- Concentrate on the set up of your workstation or office ergonomics.

Typically, aches and pains from office work are caused by physical stress from prolonged awkward positions, repetitive motions and overuse. When applied to your workstation, these helpful tips will help promote good posture and correct ergonomics:

- Chair position. Adjust the height of your chair so that your feet rest comfortably on the floor, with your knees about level with your hips making sure your seat is not pressing against the back of your knees.
- Back support. Keep your backbone straight, shoulders

back, abdomen and buttocks pulled in and chin tucked. If your chair doesn't allow this, try placing a cushion between your low-back curve and the back of the chair.

- Footrest. Rest your feet on a flat surface. If your chair is too high consider using a footrest.
- Computer monitor. Position your monitor 18 to 30 inches from your eyes. The top of your screen should be at eye level or below so you look slightly down at your work. If glare is a problem, turn off some or all overhead lights and close blinds if possible.
- Key Objects. Arrange frequently used objects, such as pens, phones and coffee cup, within 10 inches of your body.
- Headsets. Use a headset if you frequently talk on the phone and type or write at the same time.
- Wrist rest. Keep your wrists in a straight, natural position when using your keyboard. Do not use your wrist rest while typing. Use it to take occasional breaks from typing.
- Mouse. Place your mouse on the side of your keyboard so you don't have to reach too far to use it.

## Prevention

It's never too late to start

practicing good posture and office ergonomics. Besides integrating the above tips into your daily routine, it is also important that management your workstation to help reduce stress and eliminate potential injuries. In addition to incorporating good posture tips into your daily routine, it is beneficial to take stretching breaks throughout the day. Sitting at a desk all day, even with the best posture and ergonomics, can still be stressful on your body. On average, your body can only tolerate one position for about 20 minutes before needing to be readjusted. Taking a 1 minute break every 20 minutes is helpful.



## Did you know...?

According to the Department of Labor Statistics, nearly 29,000 work-related neck and back injuries were reported in 2000. Many of these neck and back injuries are due to poor posture and ergonomics.