Office Ergonomics

Self-assessment

Name: _____ Department: _____ Date: _____

To set up a workstation for optimal comfort and performance, it's helpful to understand the concept of neutral body posture. Neutral body posture is a comfortable working position in which your joints are naturally aligned. Working with the body in a neutral position reduces stress and strain on the muscles, tendons, nerves, and joints - which can reduce your risk of developing a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD). To help ensure your workstation is arranged for comfort and performance, use this self-assessment checklist.

CHAIR

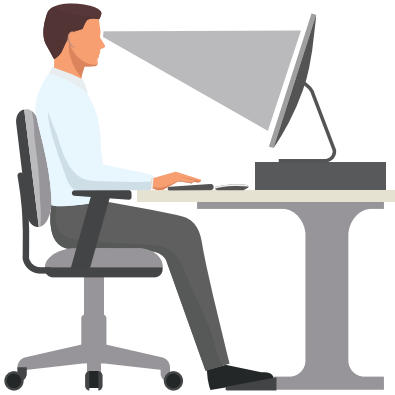|	Y	N
Have you adjusted your seat height so that your feet are positioned flat on the floor and fully supported?		
Are your knees at the same height as your hips?		
Are your thighs and hips parallel to the floor or angled slightly down?		
Does your lumbar support make contact with the small curve in your lower back?		
Are hands, wrists, and forearms straight, in-line, and roughly parallel to the floor?		
Are shoulders in a relaxed position with upper arms hanging at the side of the body?		
Are you maintaining a distance of one to two inches (or two finger widths) between the front edge of the seat pan and the backside of your knees? (If the seat pan is too deep, you may need a lumbar wedge or pillow.)		
Is the seat pan width adequate? (Make sure that there are one to two inches (or two finger widths) of space between the thigh and the chair edge.)		

KEYBOARD
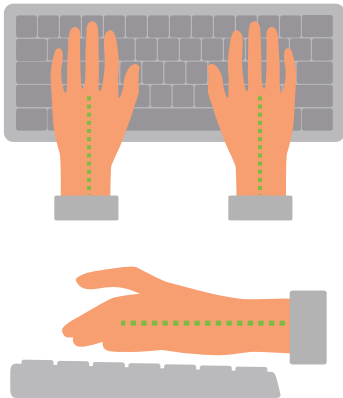
	Y	N
Is the keyboard in a flat position directly in front of and aligned with the monitor?		
Are the legs on the underside of the keyboard in a flat position?		
Is your keyboard positioned at a height that allows your wrists to be in a straight line with your arms? (If you are not using a keyboard tray, you may need to adjust your chair and/or desk height in order to work in a neutral posture.)		
Do your elbows rest comfortably at your sides at about a 90-degree angle?		
Once the height is adjusted, is your keyboard tray level or in a downward tilt? (This also helps your wrists stay straight and in line with your forearms.)		
Do you use a soft palm rest to minimize contact pressure with hard surfaces on the desk? (It is important to use these pads for periodic micro-breaks and not as a means of support while typing.		

MOUSE
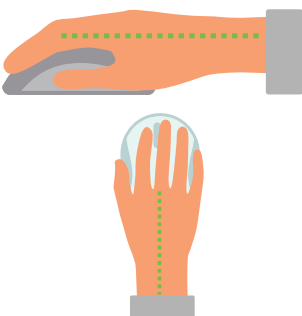
	Y	N
Do you use a soft palm rest to minimize contact pressure with hard surfaces on the desk? (It's important to use these pads for periodic micro-breaks and not as a means of support while typing.)		
Is your mouse at the same level as and in close proximity to the keyboard?		
Do you use a mouse that fits your hand comfortably and keeps your fingers relaxed and slightly curved?		
Do you use a wrist rest or mouse pad that allows your wrist to rest on a soft surface and help avoid contact pressure?		

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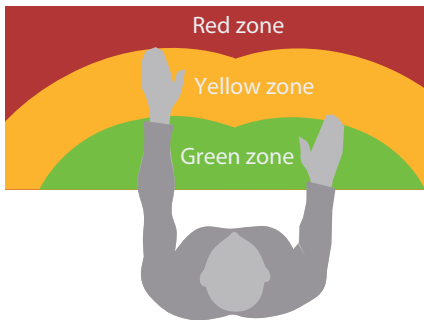# Self-assessment

MONITOR

	Y	N
Is the monitor positioned directly in front of you and square with the keyboard?		
Is your monitor placed at a comfortable distance for viewing? (Keep in mind that placing the monitor too far back might cause you to sit on the edge of your seat to compensate for the distance.)		
Is the top 1/3 of the monitor screen at eye level? (This minimizes neck strain while working.)		
If you wear bifocal, trifocal, or progressive lenses, do you lower the monitor to avoid tilting your head back while viewing?		
Do you use a document holder to help you scan between the document and the screen? (This may include a holder that is at the same height as your monitor or a slant board that is placed between the keyboard and monitor.)		

PHONE

	Y	N
Is the phone positioned close to your workstation to avoid extended reaching while dialing and/or answering calls?		
If you use the phone for extended periods of time, do you use a headset or your speaker phone? (A hands-free device can help you avoid awkward postures such as holding the phone between your head and shoulder).		

WORKSTATION

	Y	N
Frequently used objects should be located up close in the green zone.		
Objects that are used less often can be placed in the midrange area, the yellow zone.		
Seldom used objects can be placed in the red zone. Move them into the green or yellow zone when you need to handle them.		
Use storage areas such as overhead shelves, filing cabinets, and desk drawers for items that you use infrequently. Avoid storing items under your desk, which can take up leg space or strain your back when you retrieve them.		

Red zone

Yellow zone

Green zone

FOR ADDITIONAL COMFORT CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING

Use filtered lighting for glare reduction or use task lighting when needed to avoid eye strain. Keep peripheral items within a close reaching distance. Alternate job tasks throughout your work day. This will reduce fatigue and allow a different set of muscles to be used with different postures. Take periodic breaks, to rest and re-energize. Micro-breaks, 30-60 second short breaks, are recommended every 20-30 minutes for computer users. This will allow you to do some quick stretches and simple eye exercises to reduce eye strain. Remember to apply the same ergonomic principles in other work areas: while telecommuting, using a lap-top, or at a standing workstation.

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