

2 - Computer Ergonomics: Safety Training

EH&S – MGA

Goals: This safety session should teach you to:

- A. Recognize the ergonomic hazards of desk and computer work
- B. Understand the precautions they need to take to prevent stresses, strains, and injuries
- C. Work more comfortably, efficiently, and safely

OSHA Regulations: General Duty Clause Sec. 5 (b)

1. Even computer and other office work can be stressful to your body.

- A. Organize your workstation to avoid over-reaching—items that are used frequently should be kept closest to you.
- B. Pay attention to your posture when you sit.
- C. Avoid heavy lifting or awkward stretching or bending.
- D. Learn how to reduce stress and strain on your body when doing computer work.

2. Learn the basic rules of good sitting posture.

- A. Keep your back comfortably straight while you work.
- B. Use a small pillow to support your lower back if necessary.
- C. Adjust the monitor so that you can work with your head level.
- D. Your feet should be flat on the floor or supported by a footrest.
- E. Your forearms, wrists, and hands should be straight—not bent up, down, or sideways.
- F. Your chair should be adjustable so it will accommodate your body's needs.



3. Avoid eyestrain when working on a computer.

- A. Maintain a comfortable viewing distance from the screen—25 to 30 inches suits most people.
- B. The top of the screen should be just below eye level with the screen angled slightly upward.
- C. An adjustment may have to be made if you wear glasses so that you are viewing the screen through the proper part of the lens.
- D. Source documents should be at the same height and close to the monitor so that you can avoid constant twisting and turning.
- E. Position your monitor to minimize glare.
- F. Adjust screen brightness to low and set the contrast to high.
- G. Keep the screen clean.

4. Use correct technique for entering data.

- A. Keep your upper arms and elbows close to your body, not extended outward.
- B. Keep your wrists straight when you are keying.
- C. If you have a padded wrist rest, use it only when you are not entering data.

5. Take frequent breaks from keying to reduce muscle- and eyestrain.

- A. Get up and walk or stretch at least once an hour—this will use different muscles. Stretch and shake out your wrists and fingers.
- B. Walk to the printer, do some copying, some filing, or make phone calls—anything for a change from entering data.
- C. Give your eyes a 20/20/20 break. Every 20 minutes focus on something at least 20 feet away and hold that focus for at least 20 seconds.

Summation:

Employees who do a lot of computer and desk work have ergonomic hazards. Unless they take proper precautions, their bodies can suffer stress, strain, and injury from constant computer work. By following good ergonomic practices, they can work more comfortably, efficiently, and safely.