# UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
# GREEN BAY

# Computer Workstation
# Ergonomic Self-Assessment

Take a few minutes to look at your workstation. By answering a few questions, you can self-assess your workstation and help to improve your working posture. If you indicate any adjustments or concerns that cannot be self-corrected with the information provided below, contact the UW-Green Bay Safety Manager.

To understand the best way to set up a computer workstation, it is helpful to understand the concept of neutral body positioning. This 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, and skeletal system and reduces your risk of developing a musculoskeletal disorder.

- Hands, wrists, and forearms are straight, in line and roughly parallel to the floor
- Head is level, or bent slightly forward, forward facing, and in line with the torso
- Elbows stay in close to the body and are bent between 90 – 120˚
- Back is fully supported with appropriate lumbar support when sitting upright or leaning back slightly

| Item | Chair | Yes | No | N/A | Suggested Actions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Can the height, seat and back of the chair be adjusted to achieve the posture outlined below? | | | | • Obtain a fully adjustable chair |
| 2 | Are your feet fully supported by the floor when you are seated? | | | | • Lower the chair<br>• Use a footrest |
| 3 | Does your chair provide lumbar support for your lower back? | | | | • Adjust chair back<br>• Obtain proper chair<br>• Obtain lumbar roll |
| 4 | When seated, are your knees bent at an approximately 90˚ angle? | | | | • Raise/lower chair |
| 5 | Is there about 2-3" between front of seat pan and back of knees (are you able to sit without feeling pressure from the chair seat on the back of your knees)? | | | | • Adjust seat pan<br>• Add a back support |
| 6 | Do your armrests allow you to get close to your workstation? | | | | • Adjust armrests<br>• Remove armrests |
| 7 | Are your arms & shoulders relaxed at your sides without interference from chair armrests? | | | | • Remove armrests |

| Item | Keyboard and Mouse | Yes | No | N/A | Suggested Actions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Are your keyboard, mouse and work surface at your elbow height? | | | | • Raise / lower workstation<br>• Raise or lower keyboard<br>• Raise or lower chair |
| 9 | Is the keyboard close to the front edge of the desk (allowing space for wrist rest, if used) and aligned with your monitor? | | | | • Move keyboard to correct position |
| 10 | When using your keyboard and mouse, are your wrists straight and your upper arms relaxed? *The keyboard should be flat and not propped up on keyboard legs. An angled keyboard may place the wrist in an awkward posture when typing.* | | | | • Re-check chair, raise or lower as needed<br>• Check posture<br>• Check keyboard and mouse height |

| Item | Keyboard and Mouse | Yes | No | N/A | Suggested Actions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | Is your mouse at the same level and as close as possible to your keyboard? | | | | • Move mouse closer to keyboard<br>• Obtain larger keyboard tray if necessary |
| 12 | Do you use a soft palm/wrist rest to minimize contact pressure with hard desk surfaces?<br>*It is important to use these pads for periodic micro-breaks and not as a means of support.* | | | | • Obtain soft wrist rest<br>• Do not use wrist rest as a means of support while typing |

| Item | Monitor and Work Surface | Yes | No | N/A | Suggested Actions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | Is your monitor positioned directly in front of you? | | | | • Reposition monitor |
| 14 | Is the top of your monitor at or just below eye level? | | | | • Add or remove monitor stand<br>• Adjust monitor height |
| 15 | Is your monitor and work surface free from glare? | | | | • Adjust overhead lighting<br>• Cover windows<br>• Obtain antiglare screen |
| 16 | Are frequently used items within easy reach? | | | | • Rearrange workstation |
| 17 | If you use a document holder, is it placed either beside the screen or between the screen and keyboard? | | | | • Obtain document holder if needed<br>• Position it appropriately |
| 18 | If you spend more than an hour a day in combined computer and phone work, do you use a headset? | | | | • Obtain headset |

| Item | Breaks | Yes | No | N/A | Suggested Actions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | Do you take micro-breaks every 20 - 30 minutes? (walking, stretching) | | | | • Set reminders to take breaks |
| 20 | Do you take regular eye breaks from looking at your monitor? | | | | • Refocus on distant object every 30 minutes |

Remember to apply the same ergonomic principles to other work areas, such as using a laptop computer or standing workstation.

Reference websites for stretching exercises:
- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety: http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/ergonomics/office/stretching.html
- American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons: http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=a00310
- Mayo Clinic: http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/fitness/multimedia/stretching/sls-20076840