

SMCC SAFETY MINUTE

Ergonomics and working from home

So here we are ...

Suddenly working from home. You may be sitting at your kitchen table, in your favorite comfy chair or at a desk in your home office.

No matter where you sit and work, you need to think about proper ergonomics in order to avoid aches and pains in your neck, shoulders, wrists, arms, back and legs.

Ergonomics?

You have likely heard the term before, but what does it mean and why does it matter?

Ergonomics is the science of designing a work station to fit the end-user rather than forcing an end-user to work at a fixed, immovable, work station.

When a workstation is set up with good ergonomics in mind, the end-user should not experience discomfort, aches or pains while working.

Don't sit in one position. Make adjustments throughout the day to alleviate stiffness.



Be comfortable

Below are ergonomic tips to help you work safely from home.

Take frequent breaks throughout the day to get up, move around and stretch. Stay hydrated with plenty of water.

Desktop Ergonomics

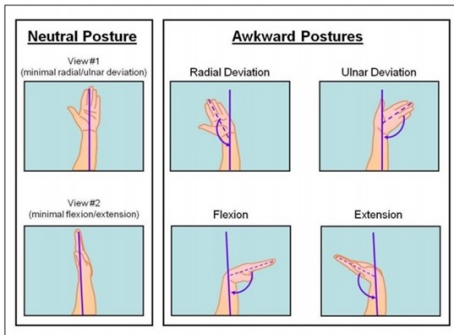
- Adjust monitor(s) so that the top of the screen is at eye level.

Note: Those who wear progressive lenses should see the link on Page 2

- Place mouse and keyboard on the same plane to avoid overreaching

- Keep wrists, hands and forearms aligned and shoulders relaxed





Wrist Neutrality

To avoid tingling or numbness in your wrists, use good wrist posture while at the computer.

- A neutral wrist position is where each wrist is in straight line with the forearm. Hold out your hand as if to shake hands. Note how your wrist is in alignment with your arm. Turn palms down as if to type, maintain wrist & forearm alignment
- The nerves in your wrists become stressed when wrists are bent in or out
- Do not rest wrists on the edge of your work surface. This compresses nerves. Hover wrists above the keyboard or use a wrist guard
- Pay attention and pause to correct poor wrist position

Online Resources

[Ten Tips for a Perfect Office Fit](#)

[Monitor use & progressive lenses](#)

[Assessing your home office](#)

[Press Herald Work-at-home Tips](#)

Laptop Ergonomics

- Utilize a wireless keyboard and mouse if possible
- Find a chair that is comfortable, one in which you can sit back while positioning the laptop in your lap for the most neutral wrist posture you can achieve
- Angle the laptop screen so that you can see it with the least amount of neck tilt (avoid static forward head posture)

Tablet Ergonomics

- If possible do not hold the tablet for more than 20 minutes of continuous use
- Use a stand with an external keyboard if possible

- Three common grip methods of tablets are clipboard, flat palm and thumb grip. Alternate between grips every few minutes

Smartphone Ergonomics

- Think about head posture! To keep your head upright, hold the device at chest height or slightly higher
- Cross one arm over your chest to support the weight of your arm holding the smartphone to help with fatigue. Fatigue is a good clue to take a break!
- Keep smartphone interactions short and sweet - under five minute durations. Save the longer interactions for your computer

