

## SETTING UP YOUR WORKSTATION

Adopt a relaxed and fully supported posture when sitting.

### **Avoid static postures:**

Remember that there is no perfect posture; even an acceptable posture becomes unacceptable over time. Stand and stretch at least hourly.

Make sure you change your working posture regularly and vary your tasks as far as you can throughout your working day.

### **Adjusting your chair:**

Make the effort to adjust your office chair so that it is comfortable for you:

- move your chair close to the desk and relax back fully into it with your shoulder blades resting on the back rest and shoulders relaxed down. Make sure you adjust the height of the backrest so that the lumbar support fits neatly at your waist level.
- Tilt the backrest back by about 10 to 15 degrees from vertical - this opens up the angle between trunk and thigh, reducing stress on your lower back and their discs.
- Raise the chair seat so that, with your shoulder blades resting on the back rest, shoulders relaxed down and upper arms hanging vertically by your side, your elbows are at the height of your fingers on your keyboard middle keys. Forearms should be horizontal and wrists straight(ish).
- Height adjustable armrests can provide additional support for the upper body; when not typing, rest the arms back on the armrests to help offload pressure on the neck and shoulders. However, if armrests, desk shape, prevent you from sitting close into the desk consider removing them.
- Learn to drive your chair with your feet rather than twisting the body.

### **Footrests**

Having adjusted your chair to the correct working height, if your feet do not rest comfortably on the floor then you need a foot rest. For tall users (6 feet plus) if the desk is too low after the chair has been adjusted it may need raising. Sitting back in your chair, with the chair at the correct height, the feet should be supported firmly. the knees should be slightly lower than your hips: If you put a plate on your thigh it should slide down the thigh to the knee.

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## **Position the monitor**

As a rule of thumb the top of your display screen should be at eye height, an arm's length away and positioned directly in front of you. The final position is a matter of trial and error/personal preference. For example, if you are not a touch typist you may find it more comfortable to lower the monitor a little as this minimises neck movement as you look between the keyboard and screen. Remember what you are trying to achieve : A relaxed fully supported posture with the back of your neck long, not poking forwards.

## **Workstation Layout**

Arrange your desk to make best use of available space. Position the keyboard about 10cm from the front edge of the desk. If you are sitting at the correct height you shouldn't need to use a wrist rest.

Other equipment, such as the telephone should be readily accessible without stretching or twisting.

Clear the space under the desk so that you can sit comfortably without having to twist or lean forward.

## **Mouse position and use**

It's important you can use the mouse with your arm in a relaxed position and not stretched out to the side or front: **KEEP THE MOUSE CLOSE TO THE FRONT OF THE DESK.**

If you use the mouse on the right and can manage without the number pad, consider using a mini keyboard which is shorter and allows the mouse to come closer to your body and prevent overstretching.

## **Document holder**

If you refer to paper documents while typing, consider using a document holder placed between the screen and keyboard thereby keeping all work directly in front of you.

## **Telephone**

Do not wedge the telephone between your ear and shoulder.

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If using the telephone is a large part of your job you should consider using a headset.

## Using laptop computers

Using a separate keyboard and mouse will allow you to use a laptop stand to raise the screen up so that you can sit in a more upright and comfortable posture.

## Final thoughts

- Your perfect workstation set-up will change over time. Check your posture and set-up frequently.
- STAND, STRETCH, MOVE.

