

## Protecting Yourself from Office Injuries

Computers have made the office worker more efficient, but have also increased the potential risk of a repetitive stress injury. This ergonomics checklist is designed to help office workers stay **safe, comfortable, and productive** at work.

*Ergonomics* involves fitting the workplace to the worker.

### Practice good ergonomic principles:

- ensure proper posturing -
- reduce excessive reaching -
- take frequent "mini-breaks" -
  - vary your job tasks -
- move around and stretch often -

This Ergonomics Checklist will help you identify potential problems. If you answer "no" to any questions, try to make some modifications to your work space or activities so that you can feel more comfortable during your workday.

This brochure was created by the USDA TARGET Center. In addition to being an information resource, the TARGET Center provides worksite assessments and loans ergonomic equipment to USDA employees.

# Avoid Injury!

## Are you at risk for Cumulative Trauma Disorder?



- Do you repeat the same motion for an extended period of time?
- Do you hold your body in an awkward position while working?
- Do you sometimes use excessive force to complete a motion or task?
- Do you sit at your workstation for long periods of time without moving?
- Do you have extra curricular activities (e.g. piano, cooking, gardening) that may aggravate office injuries?

### Common Symptoms

↳ numbness ↳ tingling ↳ pain ↳ aching

### Typically Affected Areas

↳ arms ↳ back ↳ shoulders  
↳ neck ↳ wrists ↳ fingers

**If symptoms persist, contact your doctor immediately.**

*For additional materials, please contact the TARGET Center.*



# Being Comfortable at Work

## An Ergonomics Checklist



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*Helping People. It's What We Do.*

# Ergonomics Checklist

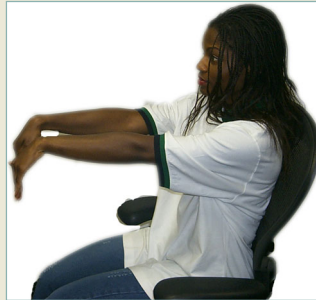
## Head, Neck, and Shoulders

- Are the keyboard and monitor aligned and directly in front of you?
- Is your monitor adjusted in a way to prevent you from twisting, tilting or stretching your neck?
- Is your monitor approximately an arm's length away so that your neck is straight while viewing it and your eye strain is reduced?
- Are your shoulders relaxed, not slouched or raised?
- Do you have a document holder near your screen at eye level?

## Back, Legs, and Feet

- Are your feet firmly on the floor or supported by a footrest if your feet do not reach the floor?
- Are your knees even or slightly lower than your hips, creating a 90 degree to 110 degree angle?
- Can you put 2 to 4 fingers between the edge of your seat pan and the back of your knees?
- Is your lower back fully supported by your chair? (If not, consider placing a backrest pillow in the curve of your lower back).
- Are you keeping your back in a neutral position, rather than stretched or bent, as much as possible?
- Are you standing rather than reaching for objects above your head?

## Stretching at Work



### Arms & Wrists

With your arms outstretched, turn your hands in a circular motion several times.



### Wrists

Outstretch one arm and make a fist, with your other hand, squeeze the wrist while opening and closing the fist.



### Shoulders & Neck

Turn your head to the right while extending your right arm across your chest. Cradle your right arm in your left and press in. Hold for 4 seconds. Take a deep breath. Repeat for other side.

## Arms, Wrists, and Hands

- Are you keeping a loose grip when writing?
- Are you keeping your wrists straight and off the wrist rest while typing and mousing?
- Do you have your mouse next to and level with your keyboard?
- Are your elbows close to your body when typing and mousing, not outstretched?
- Are your forearms parallel to the floor?
- Are all frequently used items within an arm's reach?
- Are your keyboard and mouse low enough for you to keep your arms in a 90 to 110 degree position?

## Other Concerns

- Do you have adequate lighting and enough natural light in your work space?
- If you have more than one workstation, is each workstation set up ergonomically?
- Are you able to control your levels of stress?
- Is your computer screen free of dust & glare?
- Do you look away from your computer screen every 20 minutes or so?
- Do you blink your eyes so that they remain moist during the day?
- If you are a laptop user, do you position the laptop properly to avoid injury?