Body Posture Transcript

We will begin with the concept of posture and neutral body positioning.

Posture is the position in which we hold our bodies while standing, sitting, or lying down. Understanding how your body should be aligned will eventually help you know exactly which adjustments to make to your workstation for the most comfortable and effective setup.

Neutral body positioning is a comfortable working posture in which your joints are aligned naturally. 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, such as carpal tunnel or chronic back pain.

Working in a neutral posture can reduce muscle stress and fatigue. Let's start with a neutral standing position to see what correct posture should feel like. Go ahead and stand up at your desk. Scan your body and try to maintain the following neutral standing body posture:

- Stand with your weight over the center of your feet and your feet about shoulder-width apart.
- Next, extend your head directly up (imagine you have a helium balloon attached to the top of your head and it is lifting your head high).
- Keep your chin tucked in and avoid tilting your head forward, backward, or to the side. Keep your earlobes in line with the middle of your shoulders.
- Now move your focus to your shoulders. Roll your shoulders down and back and straighten your upper back.
- Moving down to your arms, let them hang naturally down to the sides of your body.
- Maintain a strong core by drawing in your stomach muscles and avoid tilting your pelvis forward.
- Finally, make sure your knees soft and unlocked

It's okay if this position feels a little strange. Proper posture doesn't always feel natural, especially if you are not used to it. The more you practice this, the more comfortable it will feel.

Now that you know what a neutral standing posture feels like, let's try a neutral seated posture. Sit down and scan your body. Try to maintain the following neutral body positions while seated at your computer workstation:
- Begin by facing your head forward so it is level in-line with your torso.
- Straighten your hands, wrists, and forearms so they are in-line and roughly parallel to the floor.
- Next, relax your shoulders and allow your upper arms to fall naturally at the sides of your body.
- Keep your elbows close to your body and bent between 90 and 120 degrees.
- Make sure your feet are fully placed on the floor or a footrest.
- Bring your attention to your lower back which should be fully supported with appropriate lumbar support.
- Your thighs and hips should also be supported and generally parallel to the floor.
- Check that your knees are about the same height as your hips with your feet slightly forward.

If for some reason you are unable to achieve a neutral seated position at your current workstation, suggestions for how to make adjustments will be addressed in the Workstation Setup section of this training.

These two images are examples of what proper body posture looks like in both a seated and standing working position.

- You'll notice in the seated position the torso and neck are in-line and vertical, the thighs are approximately horizontal, and the lower legs are perpendicular to the ground.
- In the standing position the legs, torso, and head are approximately in-line and vertical and the feet are shoulder width apart.

Regardless of how good your working posture is, working in the same position or sitting still for prolonged periods of time is not healthy. You should change your working position frequently throughout the day in the following ways:

- Make small adjustments to your chair or backrest.
- Stretch your fingers, hands, arms, and torso regularly.
- Stand up and walk around periodically. A good rule of thumb is to stand up once every 30 minutes. If you have a standing workstation you can try the 20-8-2 rule, this rule states that you should work seated for 20 minutes, work standing for 8 minutes, and move around for 2 minutes. Repeat the cycle throughout your day.

Let's recap. A neutral body position is a comfortable working posture 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. Scan your body throughout the workday to ensure neutral body positioning and change your working position frequently – a good rule of thumb is to adjust your position every 30 minutes.