

Workstation Setup Transcript

Next, we'll talk about workstation setup. Appropriate adjustment of your workstation will allow you to work in neutral body positions, help you perform more efficiently, and feel more comfortable throughout your workday.

A properly adjusted workstation can help minimize awkward working postures. As we learned in section one of this training, neutral body positions allow you to work with minimal stress on your muscles, tendons, and skeletal system.

Now we will take a closer look at each of the following factors to consider when you're adjusting workstation. We'll look at your:

- Chair
- Monitor
- Mouse
- Keyboard
- Phone
- We'll also address space and clutter

A chair that is well-designed and appropriately adjusted is an essential element of a safe and productive computer workstation. A good chair provides the necessary support to your back, legs, buttocks, and arms, while reducing exposures to awkward postures.

Adjust the height of your backrest to support the natural inward curvature of your lower back. It may be useful to use a rolled towel or lumbar pad to support your lower back.

Sit upright in your chair with your entire back and both shoulders touching the backrest.

You should adjust the height of your chair so that your feet rest flat on the floor and your thighs are parallel to the floor. If your chair is too high for you to rest your feet flat on the floor — or the height of your desk requires you to raise the height of your chair — use a footrest. If a footrest is not available, try using a small stool or a stack of sturdy books.

The back of your knees should not come in direct contact with the edge of your seat and there should be about 2 to 3 inches between the edge of your seat and the back of your knee.

Adjust your armrests so your arms gently rest on them with your shoulders relaxed.

In some cases, it might be appropriate to remove the arm rests from your chair to prevent you from leaning or slouching on them but please note, that this is not advisable if you need the arm rests to safely get up and down from your chair.

Your monitor should be placed directly in front of you, about an arm's length away. The top of the screen should be at or slightly below eye level. The monitor should be directly behind your keyboard. If you wear bifocals, lower the monitor an additional 1 to 2 inches for more comfortable viewing. Try to situate your monitor perpendicular to any windows or so that the brightest light source is to the side of the monitor.

If you use dual monitors and they are not equally used then your primary monitor, or the monitor you use the majority of the time, and the keyboard should be placed directly in front of you with your secondary monitor to the side. This helps keep your neck in a neutral position the majority of the time.

Document holders save space on your desk by getting your documents upright. They can also cut down on neck and eye strain. If you input data from paper documents, place them in a document holder that is positioned directly in front of your keyboard and in line with your primary monitor.

Place your mouse within easy reach on the same surface as your keyboard. While typing or using your mouse, keep your wrists straight, your upper arms close to your body, and your hands at or slightly below your elbows. Use keyboard shortcuts to reduce extended mouse use. If possible, adjust the sensitivity of your mouse so that you can use a light touch to operate it.

If you use a non-hand specific mouse, alternate the hand you use to operate it by moving the mouse to the other side of your keyboard. Using your nondominant hand takes a little bit of practice but can be an interesting challenge and provide a good rest for your dominant hand.

Adjust your keyboard height so your shoulders can relax and your upper arms can rest at your sides. An articulating keyboard tray is often necessary to accommodate proper height and distance. Your keyboard should be close to you to avoid excessive extended reaching with your forearms parallel to the floor.

Place your office phone within arm's reach to minimize the risk of injury from repetitive reaching. Avoid cradling the phone between your shoulder and neck as this can result in neck pain, especially with prolonged phone use. Use a "hands-free" head set if your work requires you to spend a lot of time on the phone. Try to keep a neutral spine posture and avoid using the phone only on one side of the body.

Everyone has their own workspace preferences. Some prefer a tidy, cluttered-free desk, while others thrive amongst piles of papers. Regardless of your organization preference, it is important that you have the space your body requires to move and adjust appropriately. Avoid storing things like boxes and office equipment underneath your desk to ensure there is adequate space for your legs and feet. If you must use the area under your desk for storage, make sure you are not sacrificing a neutral body position to do so.

Make small adjustments to each component of your workstation to help you maintain a neutral body position and be more comfortable throughout your workday.

- Your chair should conform to the natural curvature of your spine, and provide adequate lumbar support. You should be able to rest your feet flat on the floor or a footrest.
- Your monitor should be directly in front of you with top of the screen at or just below eye level.
- Your keyboard should be directly in front of you so that your shoulders remain relaxed, your elbows are close to your body, and your wrists are in-line with your forearms.
- Keep your mouse close to your keyboard and can try alternating hands with which you operate your mouse.
- Keep your office phone within arm's reach to avoid repeated reaching and avoid cradling it between your shoulder and head.
- Finally, avoid storing things underneath your desk to ensure there is adequate space for your legs and feet.