

FACT SHEET



FS No. 88-045-0821

TROUBLESHOOTING PAIN AND DISCOMFORT IN YOUR OFFICE

Workers in primarily computer workstation settings may experience discomfort related to static, nonneutral postures. Below are some easy ways to modify your workspace to minimize exposure.

| If you have— | It's probably caused by— | Try this to eliminate or reduce your pain— |
|--|--|--|
| Neck, upper back, and shoulder tightness, tension, or discomfort | Head is too far forward during reading, writing, or viewing the computer screen. | Elevate work surface, reading materials, and computer screen to keep the head and trunk relationship more vertical. Avoid creeping closer to the computer screen. Ensure your upper back is against the chair's backrest. |
| | Hands and arms are not supported while typing or mousing. Keyboard and mouse height are too high. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use armrest, palm rest, or work surface to counterbalance and support the weight of the hands and arms. ◆ For typing tasks, allow the upper arms to hang naturally at the side and use palm rests or wrist rests. ◆ If possible, lower the keyboard and mouse height or raise chair height and consider using a footrest to support your feet. |
| | Head is tilted during reading, writing, or viewing the computer screen. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Tilt the seat and backrest forward to keep the head and trunk relationship more vertical (i.e., avoid bending the neck forward or backward). ◆ Consider lowering the computer screen or document if using bifocals/progressive lenses. |
| | Leaning forward on the work surface and supporting the weight of the head and trunk. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use chair and backrest as support instead of the arms. ◆ Lower the work surface to support the arms. |
| | Head and neck are tilted in a lateral direction holding the telephone between the shoulder and ear. | Use a headset or the telephones speaker feature. |
| Hand, wrist, and lower arm discomfort | The wrist is deviated in a nonneutral position. | Raise or lower the keyboard or mouse to produce a neutral wrist position. As a rule of thumb the forearm, wrist, and hand should be in line. |

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| If you have— | It's probably caused by— | Try this to eliminate or reduce your pain— |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Lower back pain and discomfort | Lumbar region of the back is not being maintained and supported. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bring backrest in further horizontally through an in-and-out adjustment or by tilting forward, and/or changing the lumbar curvature adjustment (if equipped). ◆ Adjust backrest vertically so that the lumbar support is placed at the small of the back. |
| | Because feet are dangling or unsupported. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lower chair and/or use footrest so that feet are supporting the weight of the feet and lower legs only. ◆ Adjust backrest vertically so that the lumbar support is placed at the small of the back. |
| Buttocks discomfort | Sitting too far forward in the seat pan and not using the backrest. | <p>Sit deeper in the chair. It may be necessary to adjust the backrest horizontally and/or vertically, and/or the tilt angle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Alternate between sitting and standing during the workday. |