



# Healthy Workplace

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## Welcome to the Active Desk

Click one of the areas to the right to get started!

Believe it or not, the human body was not designed for sitting all day hunched in front of a computer monitor. Those of us that work in an office can be at risk for a range of physical problems such as aching back and neck, sore eyes, and tingling arms and fingers.

The good news is by making some small changes in your work area you can battle these occupational hazards and help relieve potential stresses on your body.



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*Source: This checklist is based on information from the U.S. Occupational Safety & Health Administration.*

*Last Reviewed February 2012*





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## Welcome to the Active Desk monitor

Click on one of the areas to the right for more tips!

### Location, Location, Location

The best location for your monitor is directly in front of you with the top of the screen level with your eyes. If the monitor is located off center or too high or low, you will have to adjust into an awkward posture; this could lead to neck and shoulder pain. If you only look at your monitor occasionally it may be appropriate to move it off to the side so you can better interact with others.



### Reduce Eye Strain

One of the most important concerns when you use a monitor all day is eyestrain. Sit about an arm's length away from the monitor. Reflections and glare on the screen can also make your eyes work harder. If there is glare on your screen try these tips to reduce it:

- Clean your monitor regularly.
- Buy an anti-glare filter (available at many computer stores).
- Tilt your monitor slightly downward.
- Position your monitor away from a window or other light source.

### Office Exercises

One of the keys to preventing office injuries is to take short breaks throughout the day to stretch and walk around to improve circulation. Here are some specific ideas to reduce tension during your breaks.

#### Exercise 1: Shoulder Rolls

- Roll both your shoulders backward, down and around in circular motion about three to five times. Repeat in the reverse direction.
- You can do this frequently throughout the day or whenever you feel tension in your shoulders.

#### Exercise 2: Eye Exercises

- Look up from your workstation and focus on an object at least 20 feet away for about 20 seconds; then choose another object, again at least 20 feet away and focus.
- Repeat this exercise frequently throughout the day.

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## Welcome to the Active Desk keyboard

Click on one of the areas to the right for more tips!

### In the Wrist

Problems with the wrists and forearms from using a keyboard are among the most common injuries in offices. You may have heard of "carpal tunnel syndrome," a potentially serious condition that affects the nerves. The good news is you can minimize your risk by reducing repetitive movements and by practicing some relatively easy exercises.



The most important thing is to keep your wrists in a neutral (straight) position when typing. If your wrists have to bend upwards to reach the keyboard, it could lead to excess tension and discomfort. You might want to use a pad in front of your keyboard. If you do use a pad, remember to allow your arms and hands move freely when you're typing. The pad should only contact the heel or palm of your hand, not your wrist.

### Tips to Reduce Your Risk

- Use light keystrokes in order to reduce the stress to your fingers, hands and wrists.
- Stretch your fingers and hands regularly and enlist a coworker to remind you if you're attacking the keys.
- If you use a mouse, keep it close to the keyboard. If you have to stretch to reach it, this can lead to neck and shoulder pain.
- Try using keyboard shortcuts to cut down on the amount of repetitive clicks on your mouse.
- If you are surfing the web or editing long documents, you should consider using a mouse with a scroll wheel.

### Office Exercises

One of the keys to preventing office injuries is to take short breaks throughout the day to stretch and walk around to improve circulation. Here are some specific ways you can exercise your wrists and forearms during your breaks.

### Exercise 1: Wrist Circles

- Put your arms in front of you and your palms down.
- Slowly rotate your hands, from your wrists, in a circular motion.
- Rotate inward and outward, five times each.

### Exercise 2: Fist Clench

- Slowly clench your fist.
- Slowly open and spread your fingers.
- Repeat 5–10 times.

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## Welcome to the Active Desk chair

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Experts agree that this is one of the most important components of a safe and healthy working environment.

### No Leg Swinging

First let's look at how you sit in your chair. Start by adjusting your seat height so that your feet are resting flat on the floor and there is a small space between the back of your thighs and the chair. It may be necessary to use a footrest to ensure your feet are resting flat and not hovering above the floor. Also, make sure you have enough legroom under your desk to move your feet and stretch.



### Get Support

Ideally, the backrest of your chair should conform to the curve of your spine. Some chairs offer a lumbar support system, which you can adjust to your back. If this is not available, you can use a rolled up towel and place it in the lower curvature of your back. This helps in back support and relieving stress.

### Office Exercises

One of the keys to preventing office injuries is to take short breaks throughout the day to stretch and walk around to improve circulation. Here are some specific ways you can exercise your lower body during your breaks.

#### Exercise 1: Back Flex

- Clasp your hands behind your head (elbows next to ears).
- Squeezing your shoulder blades together, press your elbows back as far as you can.
- Release and repeat three to five times.

#### Exercise 2: Upper Body Stretch

- Stand up with your hands on your hips.
- With your knees slightly bent, turn your torso to one side until you feel a slight

stretch; hold it for approximately 8–10 seconds.

- Return to center and repeat with the other side.

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## Welcome to the Active Desk head/neck

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### Think Forward!

If you've ever felt a twinge or strain in your neck when you're at your desk you should take a close look at how you're positioning yourself in your workstation. Make sure to keep your head, neck and torso facing forward so you can see your monitor and reach everything on your desk without turning or bending your neck excessively.



### Work in the Zone

One way to determine whether you're working optimally is to perform most of your basic work within what's called your Primary Work Zone. To find this area, sit approximately at least 20 inches from the monitor, with your eyes level to the top of the screen. With your arms by your sides, use your elbows as pivot points and swing your forearms out to each side, like windshield wipers. Keep your keyboard, mouse, phone and any other items you use regularly within this zone.

Try to keep your head straight and your shoulders relaxed while you're on the phone. Cradling the phone between your shoulder and head can add tension; try to keep it to a minimum. If you find yourself using the phone frequently, consider using a hands-free headset or speakerphone.

### Office Exercises

One of the keys to preventing office injuries is to take short breaks throughout the day to stretch and walk around to improve circulation. Here are some specific ways you can exercise your neck during your breaks.

#### Exercise 1: Head Turns

- Lower your head to the side, so that your ear goes towards your shoulder; hold it for a few seconds, return to the center and repeat on the other side.
- Rotate your head to the side, if possible making your chin parallel to your shoulder. Hold for a few seconds, return to the center and repeat on the other

side. Note: don't overextend yourself if your neck doesn't turn very far; just a slight turn to the sides can help increase flexibility and ease tension.

- Sit upright and lower your chin towards your chest, hold and return to facing forward.
- Repeat these stretches three to five times.

#### Exercise 2: Reach for the Sky!

- Stand with your arms at your side, inhale and reach up with both arms with your fingers extending to the sky.
- Hold for about five seconds.
- Bring your arms back down and repeat three to five times.

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