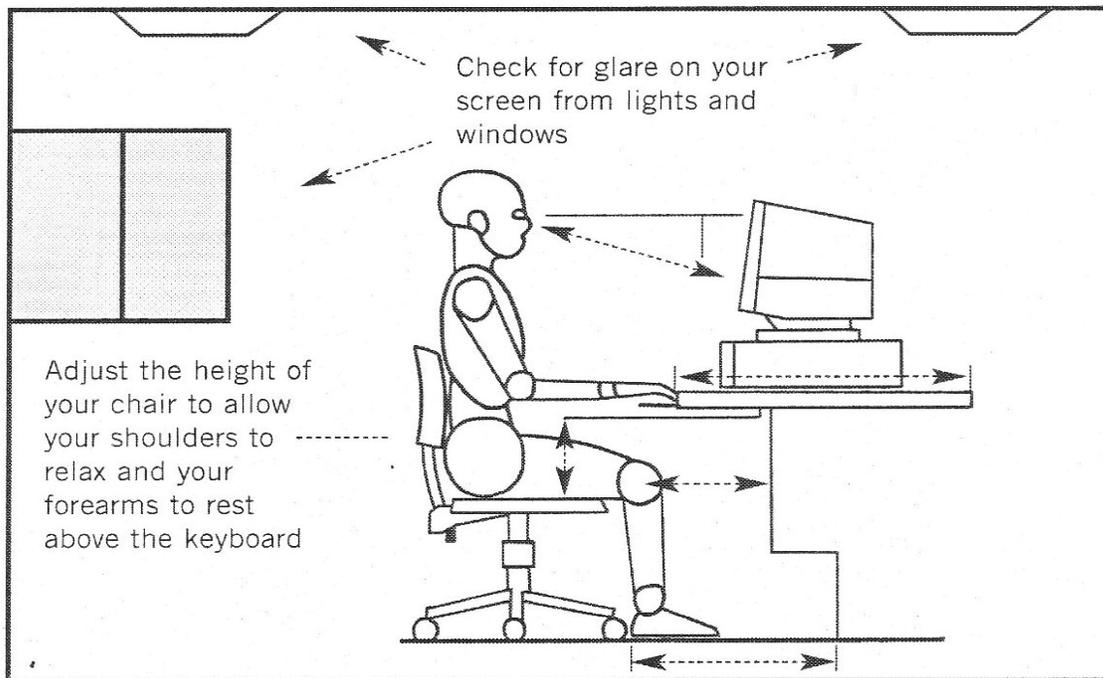




WORKSTATION DESIGN



Working at a computer may be hazardous to your health. Sore necks, shoulders and backs are common complaints when keying for long periods.

Think about your office set-up and ensure that your work posture is upright, symmetrical and relaxed.

Use the workstation diagram as a guide to help you achieve a comfortable work posture.

Start with your desk

- a height adjustable desk is preferred
- check the thickness of your desk. If your desk is too thick (greater than 30mm) it is difficult to work at the correct height
- check the height of the desk. You should be able to sit at your desk with your feet flat on the floor
- check the depth of your desk. Your desk must have sufficient depth so that you are not sitting too close to your screen.

Workstation set-up for working on a computer

Consider office chair basics

- a base which has five prongs for stability
- adjustable seat height. Adjust the height of the chair so that your forearms are parallel to the table when your elbows are 90-110 degrees or greater. This will ensure that your shoulders are relaxed when typing
- adjustable back support height. The backrest should support the small of your back, which is the main weight-bearing part of your body
- avoid armrests if you spend most of your time keying at your desk. Armrests do not allow you to get close to the desk and cause you to raise your shoulders when keying.

Adjust your screen

- your screen should be positioned at eye level. Avoid inclining your head to read the screen as this will contribute to neck and shoulder discomfort

- position your screen at an arm reach distance. Too far away and you will tend to lean forward and away from the back support of your chair
- tilt the screen to avoid glare of overhead lights on your screen
- clean the screen regularly. Fingerprints and dirt make the screen hard to read
- give your eyes a break, by enjoying a walk in the garden or by gazing into the distance.

Position your keyboard and mouse

- place your keyboard and mouse directly in front of you to avoid overstretching
- rest your hands in your lap when not keying. This relaxes your shoulders and forearms
- avoid hovering over keys of the mouse. This increases muscle tension
- don't thump the keys
- learn the function short cut keys
- position documents in relation to the screen

- avoid working from documents that are flat on your desk. If you are a touch typist, consider a document holder that places the document beside the screen. If you need to look at the keyboard when typing, choose a document holder that sits between the screen and the keyboard.

What else is on your desk?

- think about removing clutter from your desk. Ask yourself whether you need all that stuff and whether it is better to store it off your desk and take a walk when you need it
- place frequently used items within reach and avoid overstretching or twisting
- check your workstation.

Remember, even with the best furniture and office equipment, your body needs to take regular breaks away from the desk. Stand, stretch and walk.

For further information and advice contact the Workers Health Centre



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