

Learning how to keyboard ergonomically can help prevent or minimize health problems associated with working at a computer workstation.

Poor ergonomic posture and positioning can lead to pains in shoulders, elbows, forearms, wrists and hands. Continuous typing on a computer keyboard that is not done ergonomically forces the wrist back during typing. Such wrong positioning can lead to Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) and other Repetitive Stress Injuries (RSI).



Keyboard ergonomics requires setting up an ergonomic computer workstation.

Many people type on keyboards that are placed on their desk surface. If the desk surface is not adjusted to the proper height, however, the arm and hand muscle positioning are placed in in appropriately for long term typing, and nerves may be compressed. Neck and shoulder positioning is also strained. The best posture is achieved when the keyboard is below seated elbow height, a position that can be created by using an articulating keyboard tray with a negative tilt platform which tilts down and away from the user. This places the hands in a neutral posture, and arms, shoulders, neck and back can relax.

For best keyboard ergonomics the following adjustments should be made to your desk to increase your well being and prevent the development of Cumulative Trauma Disorders (CTD) and Repetitive Stress Injuries (RSI).

Following these guidelines help to establish an ergonomic computer workstation. (Much of the information listed below is taken from recommendations by the Department of Health and Human Services CDC, Center for Disease Control):

- Adjust your chair height and position so your feet rest flat on the floor or add a footrest to compensate for a higher chair. (If your chair is set too high, your leg weight is pulled downward to reach the floor, creating strain on leg, hip, and back muscles.)
 - When adjusting your chair height, your arms should be
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comfortable at your side forming a 90° angle with your upper arms.

- Your chair back should have a lumbar support to support the natural inward curve of your lower back. It is also important that you not stay sitting in one static position for extended periods of time, but alternate between sitting and standing (take micro-breaks to move around and stretch).
 - Adjust the keyboard height so that your shoulders can relax and your arms rest at sides. An articulating keyboard tray is often necessary to accommodate proper height and distance, unless you are working at a computer workstation that allows easy height adjustment.
 - Position the keyboard directly in front and close to you so you don't have an excessive reach.
 - Your forearms should be parallel to the floor (90° angle at elbow)
 - The mouse should be placed adjacent to the keyboard and at the same height, or above, the keyboard.
 - Use a negative tilt keyboard to position your wrists straight while typing for ergonomic keyboarding.
 - If your mouse slides off at this tilted angle, select a tray that has a separately adjustable mousing surface or one that has a mouse retention edge.
 - Adjust your articulating keyboard arm mechanism so that it doesn't bump your knees under the work surface.
 - Avoid extended and elevated reaching for your keyboard or mouse. Set up your desk accessories to keeping the back of your wrist in a neutral position.
 - Do not rest your hand on the mouse when resting - rest your hands in your lap when not working.
 - A padded wrist rest will help you to keep your wrist in a straight and neutral position while typing and keep your arms off the sharp edges of the work surface.
 - Do not rest your wrists or hands on a palm or wrist rest when you are keyboarding. These rests are designed to provide support only during breaks.
 - Press the keys gently and don't hold them down for long periods.
 - Keep your shoulders, arms, hands and fingers relaxed.
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