

Preventing Keyboard Injuries and Fatigue

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Many people spend part, or all, of their workday behind keyboards, and complaints about office stress and strain abound. Here are a few helpful hints that will help to reduce those office stresses and strains and decrease office injuries.

Eye Strain: Improper office lighting and glare from the video display terminal, poor positioning of the screen, or difficulty reading copy material can all cause eye strain and fatigue. These problems can be corrected by adjusting your workplace or equipment, and take vision breaks by changing your focus by looking across the room or out a window for a few minutes, this will help relax your eye muscles.

Lighting tips: Office lighting should allow you to see your text and your screen, but should not be too bright to cause glare, and should be directed so it does not shine into your eyes when looking at your screen. The area surrounding you should be similarly lightened so there are no extremes of light or dark. Place your display screen at right angles to unshaded windows and direct light, this will help out window glare.

Protecting your wrist: While typing, your wrist should be kept straight (flat). Hold elbows close to your sides and never rest your wrists on the keyboard or against the edge of your desk. A padded wrist rest, placed in front of your keyboard, will support your wrist and help keep them level with your forearms. Get into the habit of dropping your hands into your lap for a rest whenever you stop typing. Keep a soft touch on the keys, and don't overuse the cursor.

Workstation: Your chair should have an adjustable backrest that supports the curve in your low back, and should swivel on its base, and have five legs for stability. Adjust the seat so your wrists and forearms are in a straight line, parallel to the floor, and your feet are flat on the floor. If you are short, a footrest will help. The front edge of the chair should not compress the back of your thighs, so good blood circulation in the legs is maintained. Your document holder should be the same height and distance from your eyes as your display screen, and your display screen should be eye level or just a little below. Keyboards should be at a height that allows your wrists and forearms to be held in a straight line, parallel to the floor. Your desk or table top should allow adequate leg room so you can periodically reposition and stretch.

There is ample evidence that good work habits, good back and wrist posture, and a good workstation design can make office injuries and fatigue a thing of the past.