

## Workplace Ergonomics

People are not meant to be static. Often, our work requires us to sit in the same position for long periods of time. These static positions or repeating the same tasks put wear and tear on our muscles, joints, and nerves resulting in Repetitive Stress Injury (RSI). RSI can affect all parts of the body, including the neck, low back, and arms.

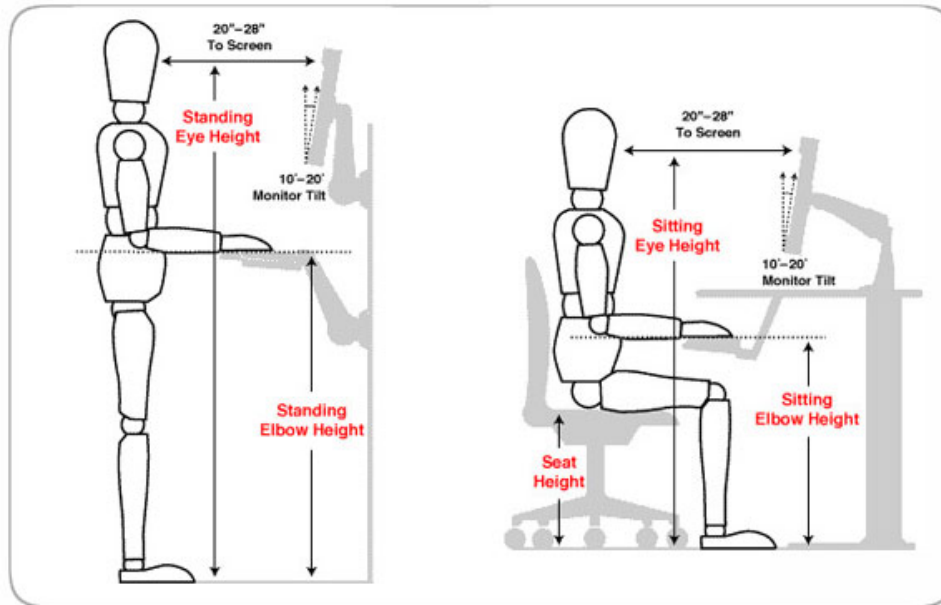
RSI can be prevented by simply moving more often as well as improving the set-up of your work station. Here are some tips to stay healthy and pain-free during your work day:

### Work Station

- “Good posture” does not mean that you must strain your body to sit up straight. The spine has a slight “S” curve. Ideally, our ears, shoulders, and hips would loosely line up. When sitting in a chair, the knees should sit just slightly below the hips with the feet on the floor.
- Do hourly “posture check-ins”. How are you sitting? Just increasing your awareness of your posture will do wonders for improving your alignment during work tasks.
- Support your back when sitting. Your chair should support the natural curvature of your spine. If you stand at your work station, supporting your foot on a small box can reduce the load on the spine.
- Work surfaces should be low enough that the shoulders, neck and arms are relaxed.
- Make sure the top of your monitor is at eye level and in front of you. If you wear bifocals, be sure the monitor is visible in the reading portion of your glasses. Be sure the prescription is current. This will reduce injury to both the neck and upper back.
- Bring commonly used items closer to you, such as documents and phones, will decrease your need to reach. This will reduce strain in both your neck and shoulders. Document holders or slant boards can be helpful.
- Avoid holding your phone with your shoulder. A headset is an easy way to prevent neck injury while working.
- Avoid over-gripping your mouse. There are many mouse varieties available that may create a more comfortable grip for you and help to avoid elbow, forearm, and wrist pain and/or numbness.

*See diagram on following page for suggested workstation setup*

## Workplace Ergonomics, continued



### Workplace Exercises

Movement every 20-30 minutes can greatly reduce the risk of RSI. These gentle exercises should take less than 3-5 minutes but will ease discomfort, create blood flow, and reduce stress on both you and your body.

*Shoulder blade retractions:* Sit in good posture. Gently pull the shoulder blades down and towards midline with your upper back muscles. Hold for 2-3 seconds then relax. Repeat 5-10 times.

*Door pectoral stretch:* Stand in a doorway with hands just outside the door frame on the wall then step forward. You should feel a gently stretch in the front of your shoulders and pectorals. Hold for 2 sets of 30 seconds.

*Shoulder clocks:* Move your shoulders up, back, down then forward. Repeat 10 times.

*Standing stretch:* Stand up and reach arms above head. Reach towards the ceiling and lengthen the spine. Hold 5-10 seconds

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