



## Workstation ergonomic guidelines



A poorly designed workstation can contribute to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), which are injuries to muscles, nerves, tendons or ligaments caused by factors such as awkward postures, repetitive motions and overexertion. MSDs are common, costly issues in the workplace. But following a few simple strategies, like those offered below, can go a long way toward preventing MSDs.

### Chair/seating

- Sit with your feet flat on the floor or footrest
- Thighs parallel to the floor
- Leave two inches of clearance between the back of your knees and the front edge of your seat
- The backrest should fit into the small of your back
- Your chair should be able to recline varying degrees throughout the day
- Elbows should be able to rest on an armrest without lifting or lowering your shoulders

### Desk

- Wrist height should be the same as the elbow
- The desktop should be large enough for both office equipment and the ability to perform work tasks
- Adequate legroom should be under the desk for posture adjustments as needed

### Monitor(s)

- Monitor(s) should be located an arms-length away
- The top 1 inch to 2 inches of the screen should be at or slightly below eye level
- If possible, tilt the monitor back slightly so your line of sight is perpendicular

- Position monitors perpendicular to windows to avoid glare, use anti-glare screens or install window blinds
- Reduce eye strain by using operating system settings or software to change brightness, increase images and font size

### Keyboard and mouse

- Keep both the keyboard and mouse directly in front of you, close to your body
- Position the mouse close to the keyboard to avoid reaching or twisting
- Use an articulating keyboard support if possible and position it 1 to 1.5 inches above your thighs; keep your wrist straight by angling the keyboard away from your body
- Move the mouse using your arm while keeping your wrist straight
- Keep wrist posture neutral, not bent up, down or sideways
- Avoid anchoring your wrist on the desk



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Risk Control at UFG Insurance | [riskcontrol@unitedfiregroup.com](mailto:riskcontrol@unitedfiregroup.com)

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### Alignment

- The keyboard's space bar should be directly in front of your body
- One monitor should be centered directly in front of you
- Two or more monitors should be directly beside the primary monitor centered in front of you
- If monitors are different sizes, the tops of the monitors should be aligned to minimize up and down neck movement
- Frequently used tools and other resources should be arranged within easy reach with the most frequently used items near your dominant hand
- To hold reference documents, use an in-line document holder placed at side of the monitor or between you and the monitor

### Lighting

- Soft, adjustable, overhead lighting is preferred (hard, bright, overhead lights can cause eye fatigue)
- A small task light can be placed nearby (typically near your dominant hand) but should not increase monitor glare

### Accessories

- Footrests
- Document holders
- Wrist rests
- Ergonomic keyboard and mouse
- Keyboard trays
- Anti-fatigue mats
- Adjustable monitor arms
- Headsets for telephone communication

### Additional strategies

- Allow your body to recover from periods of repetitive stress by taking short breaks every 30 minutes to an hour to stand, stretch or walk
- Alternate work routines between sitting, standing and walking when possible; use a sit-stand desk if available
- Stand or walk while participating in off-camera meetings
- Follow a simple 20-20-20 rule to help reduce eye strain (look 20 feet away for 20 seconds after working more than 20 minutes); many computer systems can be set to follow this cadence
- A chair with multiple adjustment settings — such as height, backrest tilt, lumbar support and armrests — can greatly reduce fatigue

Reach out to UFG Risk Control at [riskcontrol@unitedfiregroup.com](mailto:riskcontrol@unitedfiregroup.com) for assistance with an ergonomic assessment or recommendations to mitigate MSD risk.

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