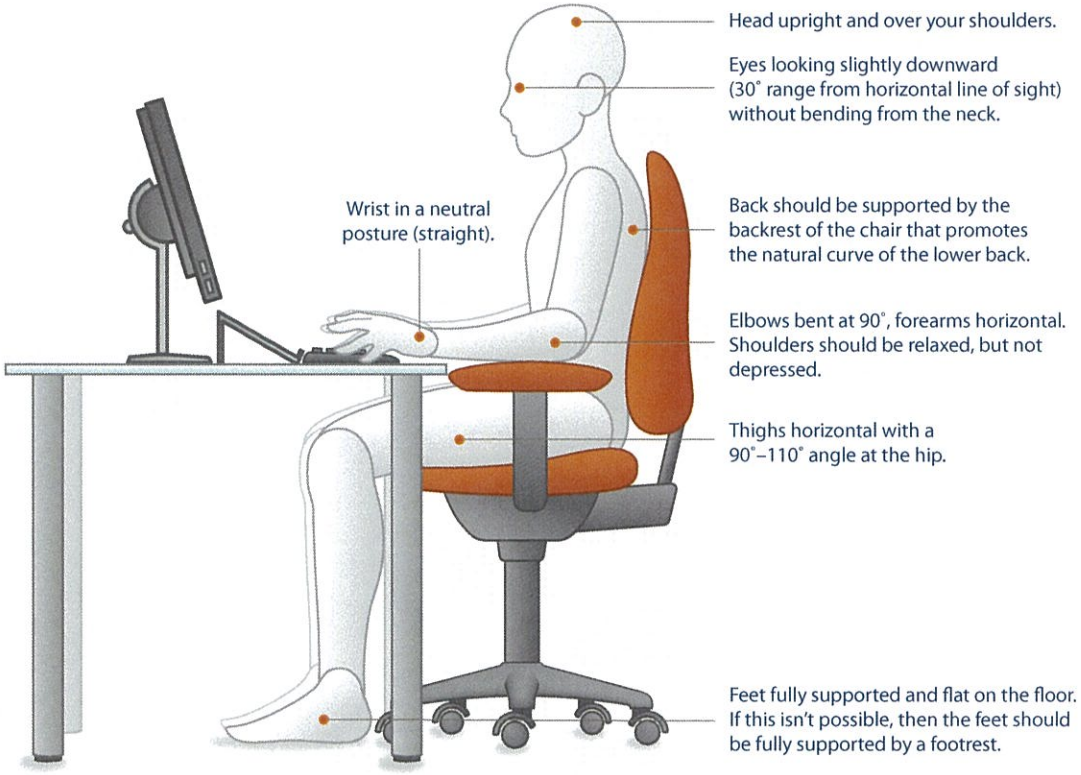
GOOD POSTURE VERSUS POOR POSTURE

To identify poor posture, you need to be able to answer: "what is good posture?" When using a computer, we may start with correct posture, but quickly resort to slouching and reaching. At your computer workstation, ideal posture can be described as:



This image depicts ideal sitting posture, however, it should be noted that no posture is ideal indefinitely. You must change your posture and position frequently by adjusting the setting on the chair and alternating tasks (typing, writing, walking and standing) as often as possible. This will ensure proper blood flow and reduce the risk of injury.

Posture is the most important aspect when looking at workstation design.

Chairs, work surface, accessories, monitor and input devices can help, or hinder, in maintaining good posture, but they cannot cause good posture. Simply having an ergonomic chair does not guarantee good posture, but merely facilitates neutral posture. It is up to the individual to learn and practice proper posture.

ARMRESTS

Armrests can provide support for the upper part of your forearms, thereby reducing the stress on your shoulders and back. However, the armrests should not prevent the chair from being drawn close to the desk, nor restrict natural movements. If your armrests cannot be adjusted to allow for this, then consider removing or replacing them. Also keep in mind that soft armrests will minimize contact stresses on your elbows. Gel wraps can be purchased to go over armrests that may be too hard.

Armrest should be adjusted to elbow height.

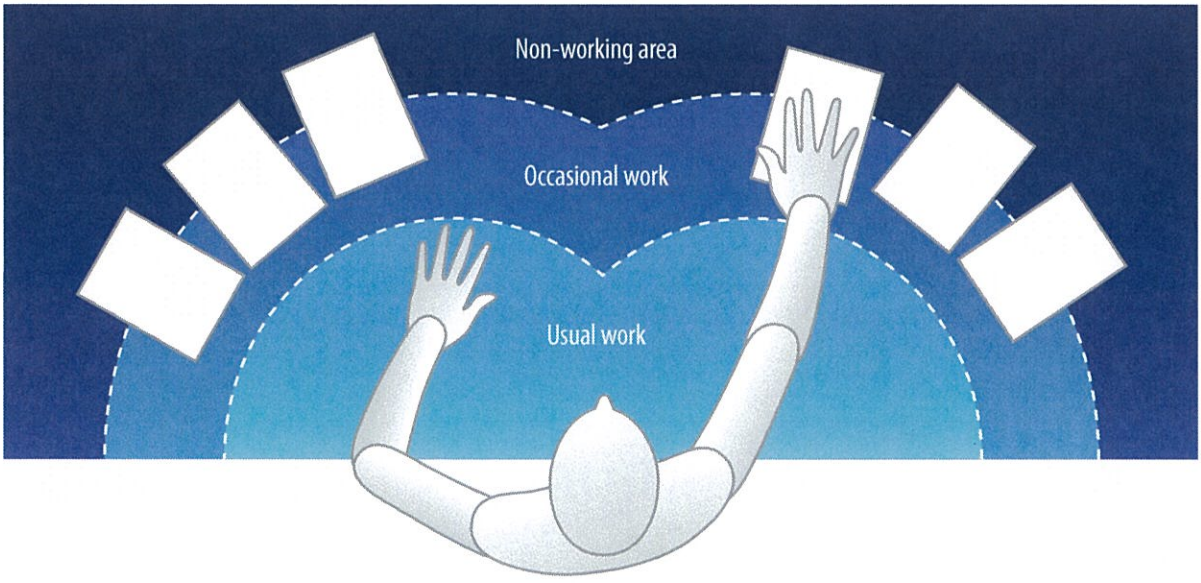
Too high, and the shoulders will be shrugged, which can cause discomfort. If they are too low, the shoulders may be depressed, which can affect the posture of the back and neck.

YOUR WORK SURFACE

Like your chair, your work surface should fit you. Once you have adjusted your chair, you can determine the appropriate height for your work surface. The top of your work surface should be at your elbow height. Elbow height is measured while your upper arms are hanging relaxed by your sides and your lower arms are bent at a right angle. Make any necessary adjustments by raising or lowering your work surface or chair. If your work surface cannot be lowered or raised to accommodate your elbow height, you can raise your chair and use a footrest. The footrest should be large enough for both feet.

If necessary, a keyboard tray can be used to bring the keyboard and mouse to elbow height. A keyboard tray should be height and tilt adjustable, have room for both the keyboard and mouse, and should not compromise legroom.

Materials used frequently should be located within easy reach (a good way to arrange work materials is in a semicircle shape). By keeping materials you do not use frequently out of reach, you will have to get out of your chair for them. This will promote blood circulation and reduce overall discomfort.



OFFICE SET-UP CHECKLIST

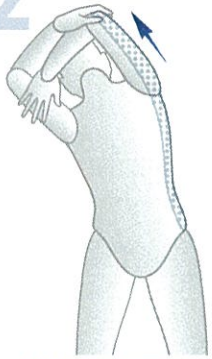
COMPUTER & DESK STRETCHES (Approximately four minutes)

Sitting at a computer for long periods often causes neck and shoulder stiffness and, occasionally, lower back pain. Do these stretches every hour or so throughout the day, or whenever you feel stiff. Photocopy this and keep it in a drawer. Also, be sure to get up and walk around the office whenever you think of it. You'll feel better!

1

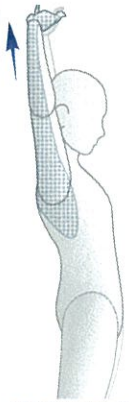
10-20 seconds, two times

2



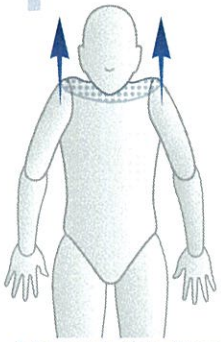
8-10 seconds, each side

3



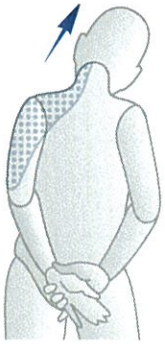
15-20 seconds

4



3-5 seconds, three times

5

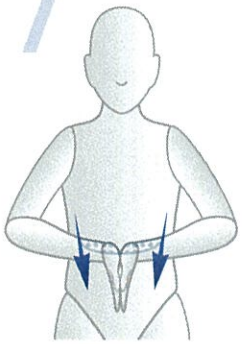


10-12 seconds, each arm

6

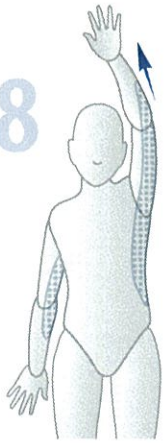
10 seconds

7



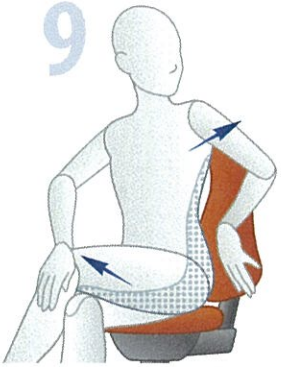
10 seconds

8



8-10 seconds, each side

9

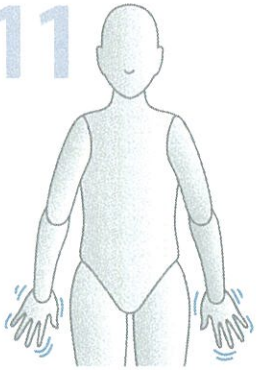


8-10 seconds, each side

10

10-15 seconds, two times

11



Shake out hands, 8-10 seconds