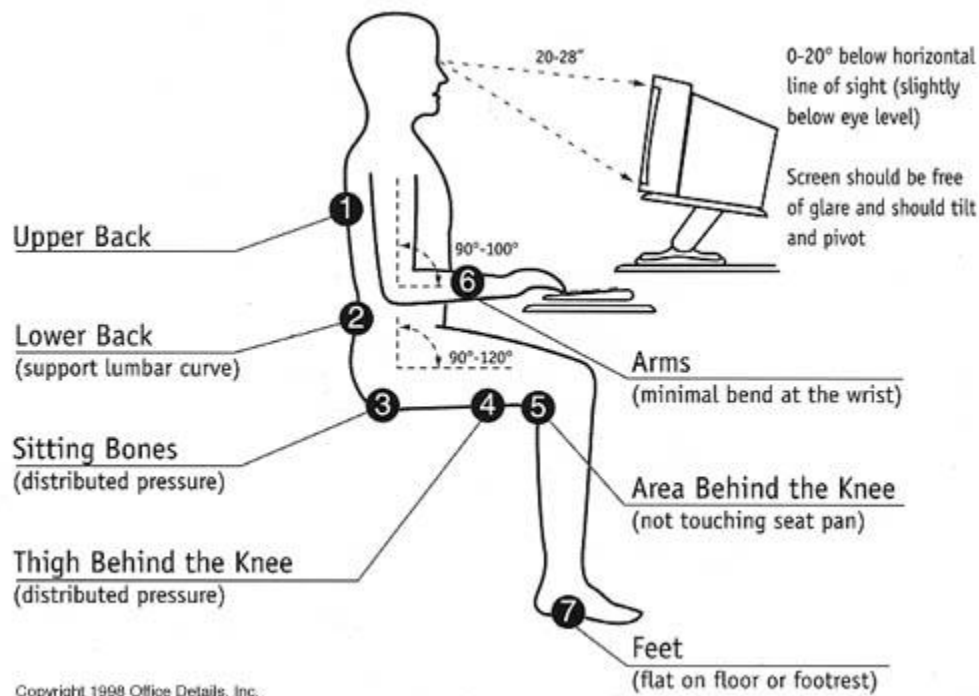# Office Ergonomics -- A Guide to a Healthier, More Productive, and a Happier Work Environment

70% of the U.S. work force now sits on the job, many in front of computers. With so much work being done in a seated position today, a comfortable workstation is of greater importance than ever before. Poor sitting posture and poorly designed workspaces are major causes of neck and back pain, which are the main reasons for lost work time.

The human body was not designed to sit for extended periods of time or work in awkward positions that chronically contract or stretch muscles. Unfortunately, most jobs today require people to perform such activities. Therefore, a well-designed workstation and proper sitting postures are essential in reducing and preventing potential problems caused by the demands of today's jobs.

Ideal Office Ergonomic Features

20-28"

0-20° below horizontal line of sight (slightly below eye level)

Screen should be free of glare and should tilt and pivot

1 Upper Back

90°-100°

6

2 Lower Back
(support lumbar curve)

90°-120°

Arms
(minimal bend at the wrist)

3 Sitting Bones
(distributed pressure)

4 **5**

Area Behind the Knee
(not touching seat pan)

Thigh Behind the Knee
(distributed pressure)

7

Feet
(flat on floor or footrest)

- You should have a large enough workspace that allows you to avoid improper postures in answering the phone, moving files from cabinets, etc.

Bad
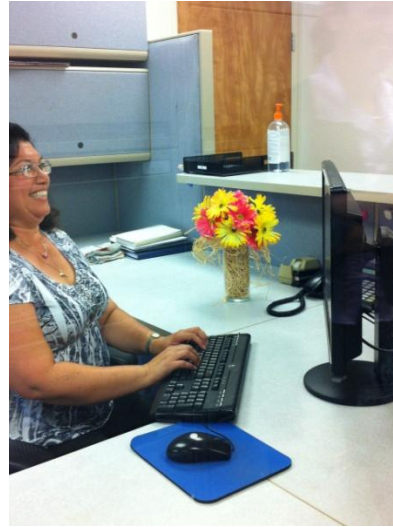
Good

- Your telephone should be positioned within reach of your non-dominant hand. This allows your dominant hand to perform activities while holding the phone in your non-dominant hand. The use of telephone headsets (headphones) is preferred because they allow both hands to be free and bad neck postures are avoided

Good

- When using a computer terminal, overhead lighting should come from the side and not directly above the terminal
- Noise due to vents, phones, printers, and co-workers talking should be minimized
- Temperature and air quality should be controlled
- Tops of computer terminals should be at eye level, keyboards angled, movable, and mouse pads installed
- Computer terminals should be equipped with glare protection screens
- Sitting posture while at your computer should be as follows: feet flat on floor, knees at 90 degree angle, back resting against back of chair with lumbar roll supporting spine, shoulders relaxed, elbows at 90 degree angle, and wrists in neutral position. Keep in mind, though, that you need to move your position on a regular basis to keep your blood flowing.
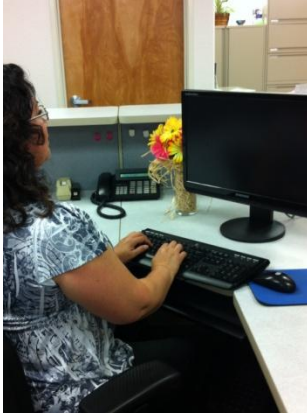
Good

- Wrists should *not* be supported on edge of table, but can be supported by wrist supports

Good

- Document holders should be at eye level to avoid eye muscle fatigue
- Head should be kept in neutral position

Bad   Good

- People who wear bifocals should have one set of glasses for "terminal" work and another pair for other activities
- Your work chair(s) should be stable, adjustable for height, and equipped with rollers, lumbar curve, curved front ("waterfall") edge of seat, and five-pronged support base

Bad

Good

- Avoid using armrests while working to reduce stress on your wrist and finger joints

50-10 Rule

Follow the 50-10 rule. For every 50 minutes you work sitting at your desk, take a 10 minute desk break. During your break, do other tasks that do not mimic your desk or computer work, such as filing, making copies, etc.