

ERGONOMICS

“The study of the efficiency of persons in their working environment”

We work most efficiently when we are comfortable and our furniture is positioned well to suit the operations that we are to perform. While good posture is important, it can vary from person to person. It is most important to be aware of how your body is feeling and how your own muscles are acting. The following is a guide:

Foot support

Ensure your feet are not dangling. They should be well supported in most cases by the floor, or else a footrest. This assists in supporting the whole body.

Back support

It is important that your lower back is supported by the chair backrest if you are seated for any length of time. Move the back of the seat up and down to ensure that the inward curve of the spine is in the lumbar region of the chair.

Hands/arms

To avoid muscle fatigue when using the keyboard or mouse, your arms should be comfortable and not restricted to one position. Your upper arms should hang down or slightly forward, your elbows should hang freely by your sides, your forearms should be roughly horizontal, and your wrists either straight or slightly bent upwards. Within these ranges your arms are able to function efficiently without overloading the muscle groups that hold them there.

Viewing of monitor

Generally an arm's distance away is good for reading the screen with a viewing angle of 10 to 30 degrees below the horizontal line to the centre of the screen. Your head should not tilt back or create a need for you to bend your neck forward.

Rest breaks

We are not designed to stay still for long periods. Changing position frequently will help avoid physical fatigue, visual discomfort or mental fatigue. Breaks away are necessary and this may include, going to a printer to pick up material, morning tea, delivering some work. You should take a rest to *prevent* fatigue – not to recover from it!

Exercises

Exercises to stimulate blood flow can be used to reverse the effects of discomfort. These may include shaking the whole arm from the shoulder, flapping wrists, rolling shoulders, turning forearms and going for a walk.