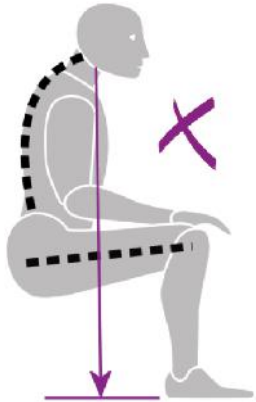


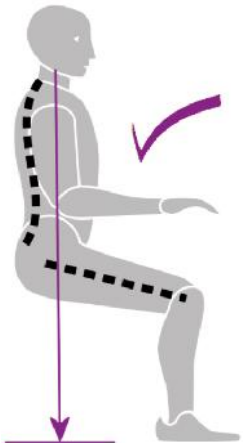
Sit tall... don't slouch

Unhealthy...



- Head is in front of the mid line of the body. The neck muscles are supporting the weight of the head leading to tension in the neck muscles.
- Shoulders are rounded and chest muscles shortened increasing the risk of developing a work related arm disorder.
- Lumbar spine is slumped and knees above the level of hips. Leads to increased pressure through the lumbar discs and excessive ligament and muscle stretch in lumbar spine.

Healthy...



- Head is balanced on vertebral column. Neck muscles relaxed.
- Open posture with chest leading and shoulders back creates correct balance between neck, shoulder and upper limb muscles.
- Lumbar spine upright and knees below the level of hips. Increasing the angle between the trunk and the thigh encourages the spine into an upright posture which may reduce and even disc pressure.

Keep Moving!

Long term static posture is bad.

Joint and muscular comfort is largely dependent on movement. With office related musculoskeletal disorders on the increase, it is now widely appreciated that movement has to be introduced into the office scenario. Remember -

“the best posture to assume is the next one”

Find ways to create movement in the office environment.

- **Take mini breaks regularly** - at least hourly. Use this time to move around, change posture and maybe do some of the exercises shown on the right. Even the act of getting up, walking round your desk and sitting down can have a profound effect on breaking down locked in postural discomfort.
- **Keep mouse and telephone within easy reach.** Alternating between the left and right side may help alleviate tension in the neck and upper limbs. Do not cradle the phone between ear and shoulder – use a headset.
- **If you have a free float or recline mechanism on your chair, use it** to regularly change your position. This will have the effect of maintaining tone in the trunk muscles, improving circulation, breathing and alertness.
- If you have a height adjustable workstation, use the opportunity to sit, perch or stand whilst continuing with your office work. If you have a fixed height desk try to stand up whenever possible, e.g. when on the phone, talking to colleagues.

Exercise!

These exercises will reduce the risk of developing computer related aches and pains. They will also increase circulation, send more oxygen to the brain and help you stay alert. You don't need to spend long on these – think of them as productively breaking a postural habit. Keep it gentle and reasonably frequent.

If you have a pre-existing medical condition it may be advisable to discuss these exercises with a medical professional before starting.

1. Sit tall

Put the heel of your hands into your lower back. Draw your elbows back and down. Keeping your head and neck steady with chin tucked in, lift your head towards the ceiling as though drawn by a cord. Hold for a few seconds. Repeat.

2. Side to Side Turning

Rotate your head left then right, taking care to keep your eyes on the horizon and aiming your chin at your shoulders. Use your eyes to focus on something in the distance. Repeat 3 times.

3. Chin Tuck

Sitting tall, imagine you are suspended by a piece of string from the crown of your head. Keeping eyes level with the horizon, tuck your chin in to make a double chin. Hold for 5 seconds, Repeat 3 times.

4. Forwards Press

Gently interlock your fingers, palms facing away from you. Press your palms away from your body, gently stretching the forearm muscles, fingers and muscles between the shoulder blades. Hold for 5 seconds.

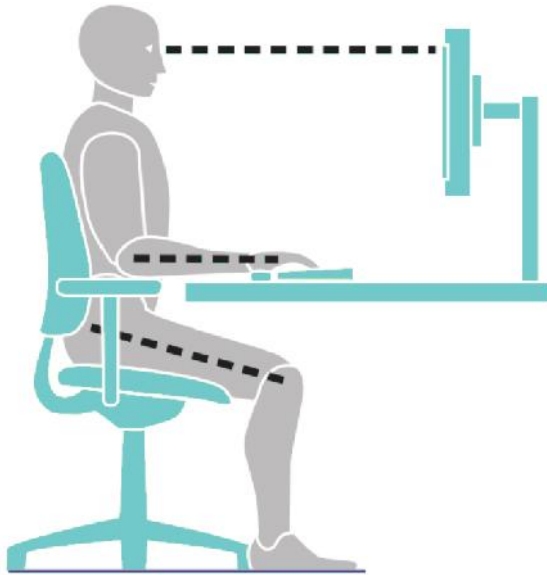
5. Shoulder shrug

Keep your shoulders back and lift them towards your ears, breathing in slowly. Tighten the muscles in your shoulders and hold for 5 seconds. Breathe out as you drop your shoulders. Repeat 3 times.

6. Elbow Flare

Put your hands behind your neck, loosely grasped. Keep head and neck tall. Squeeze below the shoulder blades and take elbows back, taking care not to press on the neck. Hold for 5 seconds.

HEALTHY DESK POSTURE



Setting up your chair

Seat height Adjustment and Footrest

Adjust height so your hips are higher than your knees with your feet flat on the floor or footrest. Do not lower your chair to suit your desk height, adjust your desk height if possible. A footrest is to be used if the chair height has to be raised to meet the desk and your feet cannot reach the ground.

Seat depth Adjustment

Needed to accommodate thigh length and enable you to sit back into the chair to gain support from the backrest. Leave a gap of about the width of your fist between your knee and the front of the seat.

Seat Forward Tilt

Rotates the pelvis forward, encouraging the spine into an upright posture. Make sure the chair is raised high enough to allow the seat to tilt forward. *A forward tilt may not be suitable for certain conditions, ask our osteopath for advice.

Backrest Height Adjustment

The height of the lumbar curve differs from person to person, so adjust the height to support your individual body shape.

Free Float and Reclining Mechanism

Movement is vital in preventing musculoskeletal disorders. We recommend that you do not lock your chair. By taking the opportunity to recline in your chair when talking on the phone, etc., disc pressure is greatly reduced.

Height Adjustable Armrests

Adjust the height so that your elbows are supported but with your shoulders relaxed. Armrest depth should not prevent you from sitting close to your desk.

Headrest

Useful in a reclined position to allow your neck and shoulder muscles to relax. Adjust height and depth to support you at the base of your skull.

Setting up your desk

The Problems

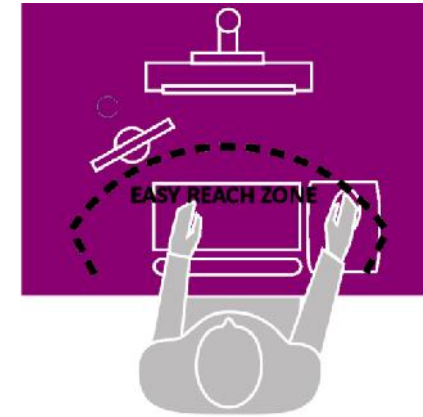
Most office desks are fixed at 72-75cm high which may not be the correct height once you have set up your chair correctly. A desk which is too low can cause a 'C' shaped spine and musculoskeletal pain. A desk which is too high will cause the shoulders to 'shrug' leading to neck tension.

The Solutions

Sit-Stand Desk: height adjustable at the touch of a button. The ideal solution as you can work at the desk in sitting or standing posture. Set-Up desk: Height adjustable by means of a peg or screw system. Desk Raisers: Sit under the desk feet to increase height by 3cm increments.

Setting your desk height

First set up your chair using information provided. The middle row of the keyboard should be level with the elbow (forearms parallel to the floor), do not shrug your shoulders to meet the desk.



Setting up your desktop

Monitor

Set the monitor screen at arm's length and at a height where the top of the screen is at eye level, position the screen at 90 degrees to any light source avoiding glare/reflections. Have regular eye checks and ensure, if you need glasses, that you select the appropriate lenses for VDU use.

Document / copyholder

When referring to paperwork, use a copyholder to position the data to prevent prolonged periods of neck flexion.

Keyboard & Mouse

The keyboard and mouse should be within zone of easy reach. It is useful to be ambidextrous with the mouse so that either arm can be rested if doing a lot of mouse work. To bring the mouse closer to your body, a narrower (300mm) keyboard is advantageous if the-numerical keypad is not required.

Telephone

Cradling the phone between your neck and shoulder causes severe muscle tension. If you regularly use the phone, consider a headset.

Writing/Reading slope

Reduces the viewing distance, lessens eye strain and encourages a balanced posture.

Laptop Use

All the above principles apply. If using a Laptop for extended periods, a height adjustable stand and separate keyboard/mouse is recommended.