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The Office At home or at work

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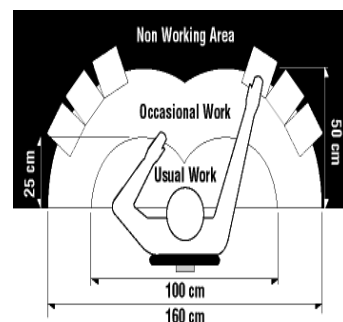
More and more, people are choosing the convenience of working out of their home. They use it to e-mail friends, organize personal finances and do their occupational work. At home, you are more able to control your speed of work, when you can take breaks, and duration of any one task. You may not suffer from extra stress related to personal relations at work, or you may not be exposed to as much noise. (www.ergoweb.com, The Office Workstation at Home; May, 2001)

The negative trend in some home offices is that work may be done at the coffee table or kitchen counter, an old dining chair used as a seat. Home offices **do** have their benefits, but they are just as important to set up ergonomically as you would (or should!) your office workstation.

What IS ergonomics?

Ergonomics is the science of fitting a job or work area to the physical limitations of the worker. Issues arise when workers are exposed to repetitive motions, force, awkward positions, or overexertion of certain muscles. Some specific conditions that may arise include carpal tunnel syndrome, variations of tendonitis, shoulder impingements and of course, neck and back pain.

Setting up a proper workstation can help to reduce the factors that contribute to many of these conditions!



Avid long reaches by locating items you frequently use and keeping them near you

Work and Play~ Computers and Your Kids

Over the past decade computers have infiltrated our homes and become a standard tool within the schools that our children attend. Homework assignments, video games and Instant Messaging all involve time spent straining little eyes and little bodies that can cause problems later on. A 1999 study by Cornell University reported that children may be at risk for repetitive stress injuries because school computers are often set up incorrectly. Children strain to see the monitor or reach the keyboard, developing poor posture and putting stress on their backs, necks and hands as well as their eyes. Dr. Pia Hoenig, a pediatric optometrist remarks that "children may not complain

because they don't realize the computer is causing the problem or they're concerned that they will have to stop using it."

Here are some things you can do to ensure your kids have a good play/workstation:

- Adjust the room lighting or computer to eliminate reflected glare off them monitor
- Monitor should be just slightly below eye level, and the keyboard placed so that forearms extend parallel to floor
- Feet should rest on a solid surface, not dangle from the chair

Special points of interest:

- SEE OUR BULLETIN BOARD FOR A WORKSTATION SET-UP INFORMATION SHEET!
- Would you like Dr. Rodwin or Dr. Schlachta to do a lecture on Ergonomics for you? Please call us at 237-3306 or speak to one of our Chiropractic Assistants at the front desk.

Weak vs Tight: How your muscles respond to poor posture and repetitive movements



Your suboccipital muscles at the base of your neck work much harder in this position and can become quite tight and sore

Every muscle in our body is attached to a bone and has both a point of origin and a point of insertion. When a muscle shortens (usually associated with contraction) the point of **origin** moves *towards* the point of **insertion**.

For example, when your shoulders round forward your head often protrudes farther than normal. The muscles in your upper back become lengthened and weak while your neck muscles become shortened and tight in order to accommodate for the extra weight of

your head. Different muscles hold the same concept when you reach for a mouse, hold a phone between your head and shoulder or are lifting, pushing or pulling all day.

If these positions are constantly repeated or held for a long period of time the muscles eventually become weakened one way and tense the other. They also then have a tendency to stay in these positions even when you are not working.

Standing around?

Working in a standing position on a regular basis can cause sore feet, swelling of the legs, varicose veins, general muscular fatigue, low back pain, stiffness in the neck and shoulders, and other health problems. These are common complaints among salespeople, machine operators, assembly-line workers and others whose jobs require prolonged standing.

Keeping the body in an upright position requires considerable muscular effort that is particularly unhealthy even while standing motionless. It effectively reduces the blood supply to the loaded muscles. Insufficient blood flow accelerates the onset of fatigue and

causes pain in the muscles of the legs, back and neck.

Excessive standing also causes the joints in the spine, hips, knees and feet to become temporarily locked or immobilized. This immobility can later lead to rheumatic diseases due to degenerative damage to the tendons and ligaments. (www.ccohs.ca, Working in a Standing Position: August, 1998)

All our health care practitioners are experienced in dealing with repetitive strain injuries whether it be in acupuncture, chiropractic care or massage therapy.

Check out the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety for further information and useful tips at www.ccohs.ca then link to OSH Answers at the bottom of the screen

Under Pressure ...

An article in msnbc.com had a statistic from a chiropractor showing there is approximately 25 percent more pressure on your spine when you are sitting that when you are lying down. And those of us with office jobs do a lot of sitting!

Tight muscles in the neck and lower back, along with poor posture can

compound vertebral misalignments. A chiropractic adjustment can help to realign these misplaced vertebrae while massage therapy can reduce the tension of the surrounding tissue. Both treatments are also effective in dealing with carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis and shoulder impingements... injuries that arise from reaching for that mouse!



Sitting increases the pressure on your spine by 25 percent