

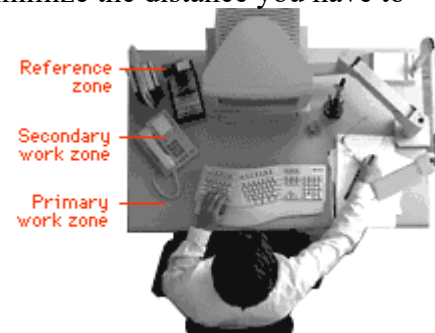
Risk Management Ergonomic Guidelines

Personalizing your environment so that it is comfortable for your work situation promotes a healthy physical and mental lifestyle. Studies show that a carefully planned work environment can actually increase productivity. Of course, only you can judge what is best for you, so we encourage you to adapt the following tips to your own needs. What is ergonomics? This term is often used and often misunderstood. Ergonomics is a science that addresses human performance and well-being in relation to various types of jobs, equipment, tools, and environment. So ergonomics as it's related to computers is concerned with the interactions among a person using a computer, the work methods and tools employed when using a computer, and the work area.

Arranging Your Workspace

If possible, arrange your tools around your desk so that you minimize the distance you have to reach for them. Divide your work space into three zones:

- Primary work zone - the distance from elbow to hand.
- Secondary work zone - within arm's reach.
Use this zone to position those items that you use frequently, but don't need all the time.
- Reference zone - outside arm's reach.
Use this zone for your least-often used items.



Computers and Body Fatigue

Computer users sometimes experience such discomfort as back pain, stiff neck and shoulders, sore hands and wrists, or tired legs. Much of this discomfort can be prevented because the symptoms often arise from pushing the body beyond its natural limits. In addition to improving the setup of your workspace, it's also important to consider your lifestyle. Healthful food, exercise, and rest can help improve your health and comfort. Seek medical assistance for any persistent discomfort. Minimize the following actions:

- Sitting in awkward or twisted postures.
- Maintaining the same posture for too long.
- Reaching frequently.
- Using too much muscular effort, even for relatively easy tasks.
- Pressing on the soft tissues of your body - for example, leaning your arms against a hard desk edge.
- Performing repetitive tasks that require awkward body positions or forceful exertions, without allowing the body a chance to recover.

Maintaining Good Work Habits

When you're not typing, rest your arms and wrists on a palm rest, rather than on a hard desk edge. If you use a palm rest, try to rest only when not typing. Alternatively, move your keyboard well in from the edge of the work surface so that you're not resting on the edge. Consider support for your lower back. Performing different tasks gives your body a chance to recover while you keep up your productivity. Alternate among several different tasks so that you don't do the same task for long periods at a single sitting. Incorporate these tips into your lifestyle:

Adjust the height of the chair back so that there's contact between the seat back and the most curved part of your back.

If you have a chair with armrests, they should be height-adjustable so that you're not hunching or slouching your shoulders to use them.

Alternate between the mouse or other pointing device and your keyboard. This provides a recovery pause from both.

Use a light touch when pressing the keyboard keys and holding the mouse.

Keep the mouse or trackball close to the keyboard to minimize reaching from the shoulder.

If you use the mouse or trackball more than the keyboard, place the mouse in front of you and the keyboard slightly to one side.

If your chair needs to be positioned high to accommodate a straight wrist position, use a footrest to support your legs.

Place your monitor 18 to 30 inches away from your eyes.

Use a document holder to position papers, large books, or printouts.

Let your arms fall relaxed at your sides to avoid shrugging.

Your Ergonomics Checklist

Use this checklist to help you make adjustments to your work area to enhance your comfort when using the computer.

- Place monitor screen perpendicular to the window.
- Adjust or close window coverings. Arrange materials and equipment by frequency of use and importance.
- Ensure that reference materials storage does not require excessive reaching or twisting.
- Clear area under and around desk.
- Remove sources of distraction around the monitor.
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Consult a qualified health professional if you feel any aching, numbing, or tingling in your arms, wrists, or hands.
- Take frequent recovery pauses from typing.
- Maintain a straight wrist position while typing.
- Avoid resting on your wrists while typing.
- Use a light touch on keys while typing.
- Maintain good health habits.
- Adjust keyboard and chair height to keep wrists straight.
- Don't rest wrist and forearm on a hard or sharp edge.
- Place mouse/trackball next to the keyboard.
- Use a light touch on the mouse.
- Keep feet on the floor or supported by a footrest.
- Support lower back.
- Use armrests, if possible, to comfortably support the arms.
- Adjust chair positions and postures throughout the day.
- Vary tasks throughout the day.
- Place screen 18 to 30 inches from eyes.
- Position desk light away from the eyes and screen.
- Remove sources of reflective glare (paper, shiny posters).
- Adjust brightness and contrast controls.
- Ensure that screen is clean.
- Place top of screen at eye level (lower for bifocal wearers).
- Place reference materials at same height as and next to the monitor.
- Schedule eye examinations frequently.

Exercise

Using a monitor, like other close work, places such demands on your eyes that it is important to take brief (30-second to 2-minute) but frequent pauses throughout the time you are working with your computer. The recovery pause gives your eyes a chance to recover from fatigue. During your recovery pause, try some of the following exercises to help you feel refreshed.

Note: Don't do any exercise that feels uncomfortable or causes straining.

Do these exercises to help your eyes feel refreshed:

- Yawning and blinking can help to keep your eyes lubricated.
- Changing focus can help to relax the muscles of your eyes. To try this, look at your fingertip with your arm stretched in front of you, then to a point far away from you, then back to your fingertip.
- Palming can help to relieve eyestrain. To try this, cover your eyes with your hands, while you breathe deeply.

Do these body exercises during breaks:

- Deep breathing can help relieve tension in your muscles.
- Hand and finger massages can help to keep your hands warm and reduce cramping and stiffness.
- The executive stretch is a good exercise for the entire upper body. To try this, clasp your hands behind your head and gently stretch your elbows back while taking in a deep breath.
- Shoulder shrugs can help to reduce tension or stiffness in the upper back and neck. To try this, gently pull your shoulders up toward your ears and then relax your shoulders downward.

Travis County-Risk

Management

Office Ergonomics

Survey

With increased work demands has come a more pressing need for good ergonomic practice in our offices. Travis County recognizes that ergonomics – fitting the job to the person – can help reduce work injuries, improve employee morale, and improve office productivity.

People do not perform their best in poorly designed work environments. A deficient work environment may lead to aches and pains for employees. In the most severe situations, performance is drastically compromised and long-term disability injuries may develop.

The Office of HRMD Risk & Safety will conduct office ergonomic evaluations to any Travis County employee upon the request of the division manager. The evaluations are typically done on an individual basis and take approximately twenty minutes. A representative from the HRMD Risk & Safety Department will review the basics of office ergonomics and workstation set up. Appropriate adjustments and/or recommendations will be provided, along with a written evaluation. If recommendations include any replacement item purchases, it is the responsibility of the individual's department to make them. If an item is deemed to be of a non-ergonomic design, as defined in the Travis County Ergonomics Program Policy, it is possible that the HRMD Risk & Safety Department will share the cost of purchasing an item that meets the policy standards. The recommendations are usually to modify existing workstations as cost effectively as possible.

HRMD Risk & Safety Department will also conduct presentations regarding office ergonomics if a department has several (five or more) interested individuals. The presentation includes a twenty to thirty minute talk featuring the key aspects of office ergonomics and, if requested, individual evaluations are provided. The individual evaluations would then only take approximately ten minutes for each person. Departments requesting such evaluations should provide a room and equipment to make a PowerPoint presentation.

If you need a workstation evaluation or need help minimizing risk factors, please submit a completed Ergonomics Assessment Request form to Reid Hoffman at Reid.Hoffman@traviscountytexas.gov.

Improper posture is often caused by

- Poor equipment design
- Incorrect adjustments or poor positioning of equipment
- Any combination of the above

POSTURE GUIDELINES

Body Area	Guidelines
Neck	Eye level should be horizontally aligned with the top of the monitor. The distance from the eyes to the screen should be 18" to 24".
Arms	Position the armrests 0.5" below the working elbow height. Keep frequently used items within 16" of the body.
Wrists/Hands	Elbow and wrist should be the same height. The keyboard should be flat or tilted slightly away from the employee. Hands should float over the keyboard when typing, not rest on the palm rest.
Back	Both upper and lower back should make contact with backrest, with the backrest height adjusted to fit the curvature of the spine.
Feet	Feet should be flat on the floor or in full contact with a footrest.

Take this Ergonomic Survey to see if you have task/risk factors

Add the points associated with your choices:

(The lowest possible score is 28 points and the highest possible score is 128 points. The goal is to get to the lowest practical score.)

1. When seated, the top of my computer screen is:
 - a. At or below eye level (2 points)
 - b. Slightly above eye level (4 points)
 - c. Significantly above eye level (8 points)

2. When typing at my computer, to see the monitor I look:
 - a. Directly ahead (2 points)
 - b. Slightly to one side by moving my eyes (4 points)
 - c. To one side by moving my head (8 points)

3. When facing the monitor or screen I am:
 - a. Facing an area of approximately the same color and brightness as the monitor (2 points)
 - b. Facing a window or extremely bright area (8 points)
 - c. A window or extremely bright area is directly behind you (8 points)

4. The primary screen used has:
 - a. A very light background with dark characters similar to print on paper (2 points)
 - b. A light colored background with darker characters (4 points)
 - c. A dark colored or black background with light characters (8 points)

5. The images/characters on my screen appear to be:
 - a. Sharp and clear (2 points)
 - b. Fuzzy and out of focus (8 points)

6. The monitor screen is provided with an anti-glare filter.
 - a. Yes (2 points)
 - b. No (8 points)

7. When using input documents, they are located:
 - a. On a document holder between the monitor and keyboard (2 points)
 - b. On a document holder at the same distance and next to the screen (4 points)
 - c. On a document holder but not at the same distance nor next to the screen (6 points)
 - d. Flat on the work surface either in front or to the side of the screen (8 points)

8. When using a mouse, it is normally located:
 - a. My computer has no mouse (0 points)
 - b. On a holder, at approximately elbow height, next to the keyboard (2 points)
 - c. On a holder next to the keyboard, but not at elbow height (4 points)
 - d. On a holder at elbow height but not next to the keyboard (4 points)
 - e. On the main work surface, in front of the keyboard and above elbow height (8 points)

9. When seated, the relative position of my keyboard is:
 - a. At approximately elbow height (2 points)
 - b. Slightly above or below elbow height (4 points)
 - c. Significantly above or below elbow height (8 points)

10. The keyboard holding area is provided with a palm rest.
 - a. Yes (2 points)
 - b. No (4 points)

11. When using the telephone, I normally:
 - a. I don't have a telephone at my workstation (0 points)
 - b. Use a telephone headset (2 points)
 - c. Use a telephone shoulder rest or hold the phone to your ear with one hand (4 points)
 - d. Hold the phone to your ear with your shoulder, without a shoulder rest (8 points)

12. The height of my chair can be adjusted by:
- a. A lever located under the edge of the chair (2 points)
 - b. Standing up and spinning the chair counter clockwise to raise and clockwise to lower (4 points)
 - c. The height is not adjustable or the height adjustment is broken (8 points)
13. When seated at the computer, my feet normally:
- a. Rest on the floor or a footrest (2 points)
 - b. Rest on the chair support (4 points)
 - c. Tend to "dangle" and not comfortably reach the floor (8 points)
14. When seated at the computer, My back:
- a. Is supported by the backrest of the chair (2 points)
 - b. Is supported by a pillow or cushion placed between my back and the chair's backrest (4 points)
 - c. Is not supported by the chair nor a cushion (8 points)
15. The edges of my workstation, keyboard, or keyboard tray against which I may lean are:
- a. Padded (2 points)
 - b. Rounded, but not padded (4 points)
 - c. Sharp, right angles (8 points)
16. When seated at the computer, I feel that my chair:
- a. Fits me comfortably (2 points)
 - b. Is too small for me (8 points)
 - c. Is too large for me (8 points)

TOTAL EQUIPMENT POINTS: _____

Anywhere you scored higher than 2 points, if feasible, make appropriate adjustments to get your score down and minimize your risk factors.



TRAVIS COUNTY – RISK MANAGEMENT REQUEST FOR SERVICES

<p style="text-align: center;">INDOOR AIR QUALITY</p> <p>DIAGNOSIS – CHECK ONE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> EMISSION <input type="checkbox"/> INSPECTION</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> GENERAL <input type="checkbox"/> EVENT</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ERGONOMIC STUDY</p> <p>DIAGNOSIS – CHECK ONE</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK STATION <input type="checkbox"/> PPE</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EQUIPMENT <input type="checkbox"/> POST WC INJURY</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">TRAINING/CONSULTATION</p> <p>DIAGNOSIS – CHECK ONE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> IAQ <input type="checkbox"/> ERGONOMIC</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> GENERAL <input type="checkbox"/> EVENT</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____</p>
CLAIM NUMBER	DATE OF LOSS OR REQUEST:	DATE REPORTED OR SCHEDULED:
DIV/DEPT NAME:		
LOCATION NAME:		
LOCATION ADDRESS		
SPECIFIC LOCATION W/IN LOCATION:		
PRIMARY CLAIMANT (REQUESTOR) LAST NAME:	FIRST NAME	EMPLOYEE ID NO.
PRIMARY CLAIMANT (REQUESTOR) TELEPHONE NUMBER:	PRIMARY CLAIMANT (REQUESTOR) OCCUPATION: & JOB TITLE:	
MANAGERS NAME	TITLE:	MANAGERS SIGNATURE (NOT NECESSARY IF SENT VIA MANAGERS EMAIL):
MANAGERS PHONE NUMBER		
DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM OR REQUEST (TO BE COMPLETED BY EMPLOYEE)		
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WILL YOU BE MOVING TO A NEW WORK LOCATION ?		
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HAS A PRIOR ASSESSMENT BEEN DONE?		
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TRAVIS COUNTY HRMD – RISK MANAGEMENT REQUEST FOR SERVICES

COMMENTS:
