



UTS:STAFF

SAFETY & WELLBEING AT WORK: COMPUTER COMFORT

It is important that you move regularly when working on the computer as the human body was not designed to stay in the same position for long periods. Varying tasks and taking regular short rest breaks away from the computer to perform gentle stretching and eye exercises (at least every half hour) will optimise circulation and assist with flexibility and joint mobility.

Correct posture will ensure an even distribution of workload on the body and will reduce fatigue. Correct adjustment of furniture and equipment will assist you to maintain correct posture and body alignment. Learning to touch type will reduce repeated neck movement.

WORKSTATION SETUP

It is important to adjust your workstation so that:

- > The chair height allows your feet to be flat on the floor or on a footrest
- > The back rest supports your lumbar curve
- > There is adequate clearance between the desk and thighs
- > Thighs are parallel to the floor
- > Shoulders are relaxed and elbows are at about a 90 degree angle when hands are on the home row of keys (a-l)
- > Wrists are straight when resting on the home row of keys
- > The screen is set at a comfortable viewing distance (at approximately arms length)
- > The top of the screen is set at about eye level.



LAPTOP AND NOTEBOOK COMPUTERS

The setup is basically the same configuration as for a desktop computer, but the important thing to remember is that laptops are made for convenience, not for comfort. So you need to add auxiliary items to the laptop in order to be safe and comfortable. Attach an independent keyboard and mouse, and have your laptop up on a riser so that the top of the screen can be at eye level. Alternatively, attach a monitor to your laptop and have your laptop off to the side, and then adjust your monitor position as you would for a desktop computer.

SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

The basics

- > Ensure that light from windows and light fittings does not create glare or reflection. If so, turn screen or block path of light
- > The task chair should have a fully adjustable chair height, back rest position and seat tilt
- > Ensure there is adequate leg clearance under the desk
- > Take short rest breaks at least every half-hour to stretch and perform eye exercises
- > Intersperse keying and mouse tasks with a variety of other work tasks
- > Move frequently used items within easy reach
- > Keep the workspace free from clutter

Chair

- > Move your hips as far back in the chair as they can go - there should be space between the back of your knee and the front of the seat
- > Position the maximum padding on the back rest in the small of your back, at waist level
- > Move your chair in to the desk so that you are sitting flush to the desk edge and directly in front of the screen and keyboard
- > Adjust the seat pan height so that the work surface is just below elbow height, with your navel in line with the spacebar
- > Obtain a footrest if your feet are dangling
- > Lower the chair for reading/writing tasks and raise it again when keying

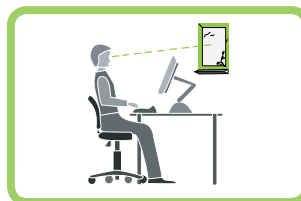
Keyboard & mouse

- > Relax your arms and elbows by the side of your body and then position the keyboard approximately 8 to 10cm from the desk edge, so that you do not need to over-reach
- > Position the mouse close to the side of the keyboard
- > Hold the mouse loosely with all fingers and follow each movement with the arm and shoulder
- > Alternate mouse use between the right and left hand from time to time
- > Learn to use keyboard shortcut commands to reduce mouse use

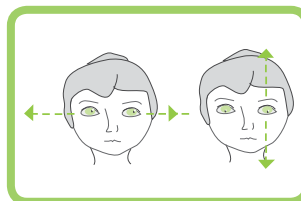
Computer screen

- > Position the screen at approximately arms distance away when you are sitting flush to the desk edge
- > Position the top of the screen at eye level
- > If your glasses have more than one prescription, lower the screen until your chin is not protruding or retracting
- > Position source documents in line between the keyboard and the screen on a book lift style copy holder

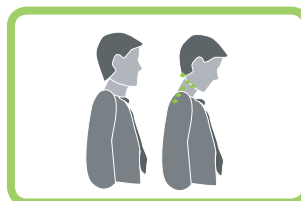
GENTLE STRETCHING AND EYE EXERCISES



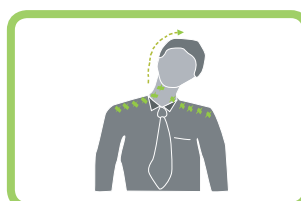
Look up and away from the screen. Focus on an object more than 3 metres away e.g. look out of the window or at a picture on a far wall. Shift your vision back to the screen and refocus.



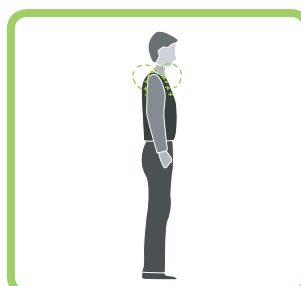
Holding your head straight, look up then look back to the centre. Look down, then look back to the centre. Look off to the left, then look back to the centre. Look to the right, then look back to the centre.



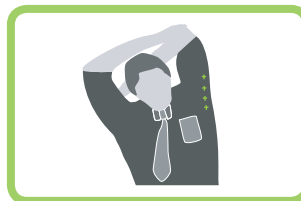
Raise the head to straighten the neck. Tuck the chin in and upwards, creating a double chin. This also results in a forward tilt of the head. Repeat several times.



Keeping your chin tucked in, gently lower your ear to your shoulder and hold for 10 seconds on either side. Repeat several times.



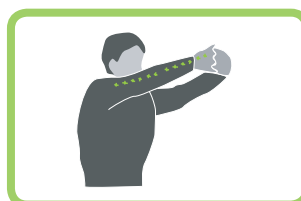
Circle shoulders forward several times, then backwards. Repeat 3 to 5 times.



Lift your arm up high, then relax and flop the arm down behind your neck. With the elbow held high, cradle your elbow with your opposite hand and lean. Hold for 4 seconds, then repeat on the other arm.



Straighten your arm in front of you and bend your wrist forward. Gently assist the stretch with your other hand. Hold for 10 seconds then stretch your wrist back and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat with the other arm.



Interlace your fingers with your palms facing outward, and then straighten your arms in front of you. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat several times.

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS FOR MICROSOFT® WORD™ AND EXCEL™

WINDOWS®	MAC OS®	ACTION
Ctrl + A	Command + A	Select contents of page
Ctrl + B	Command + B	Bold selected text
Ctrl + C	Command + C	Copy selected text
Ctrl + X	Command + X	Cut selected text
Ctrl + V	Command + V	Paste
Ctrl + I	Command + I	Italicise selected text
Ctrl + O (Word & Excel)	Command + O	Open file
Ctrl + S	Command + S	Save file
Ctrl + P	Command + P	Print file
Ctrl + F	Command + F	Find in document
Alt + F4	Command + W	Close document/window
Ctrl +Enter (Word only)	Shift + Enter	Insert page break

FURTHER RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

Safety & Wellbeing Branch web site - www.safetyandwellbeing.uts.edu.au

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