

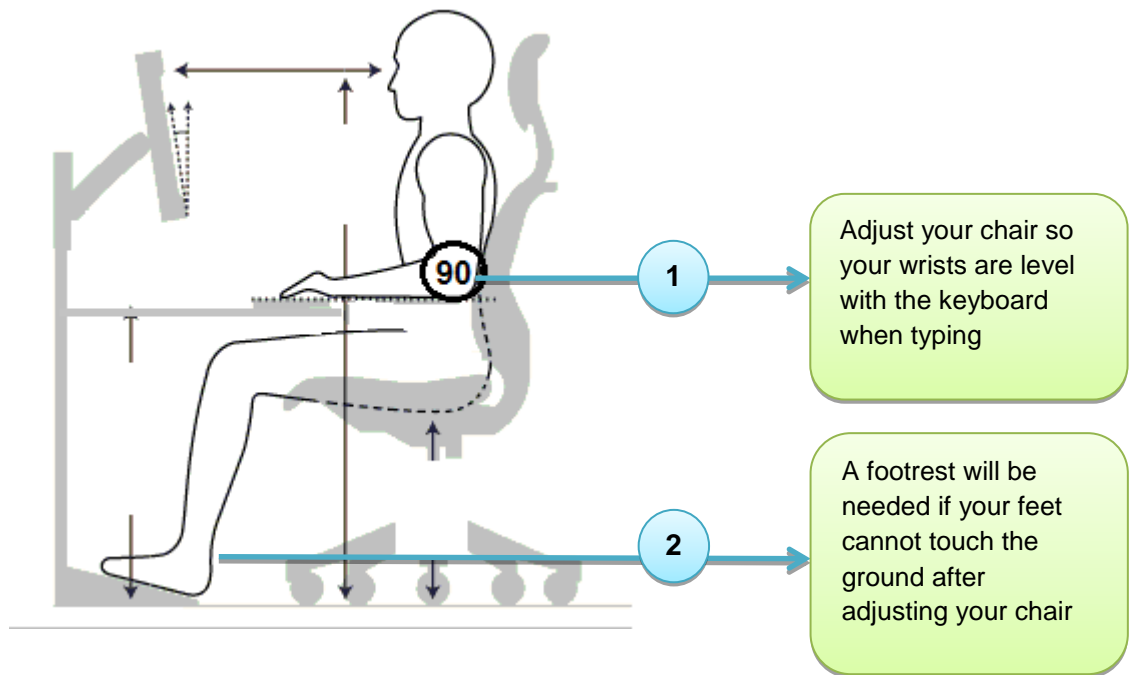
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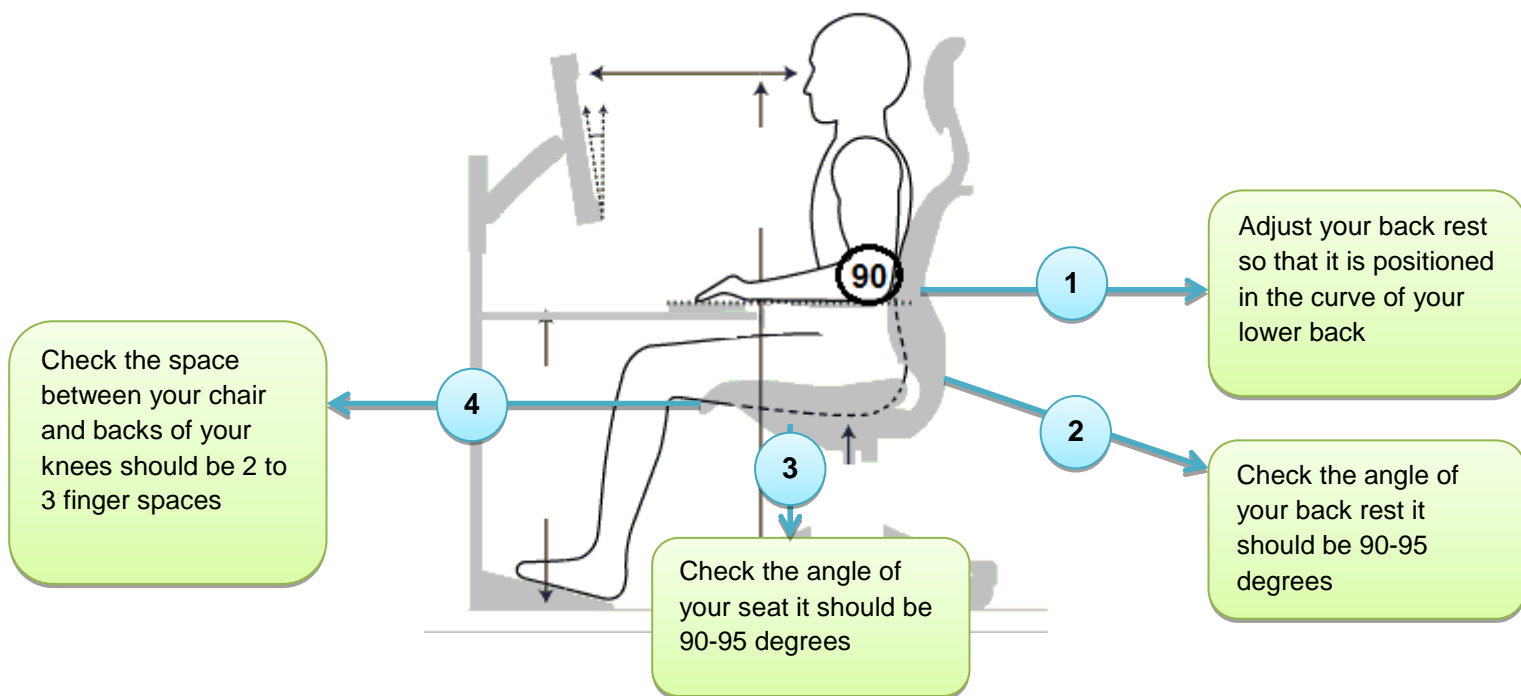
1. Setting up your computer workstation

Having your computer workstation set-up correctly will assist in preventing injuries. Use the following steps in this guide to assist in setting up your workstation correctly.

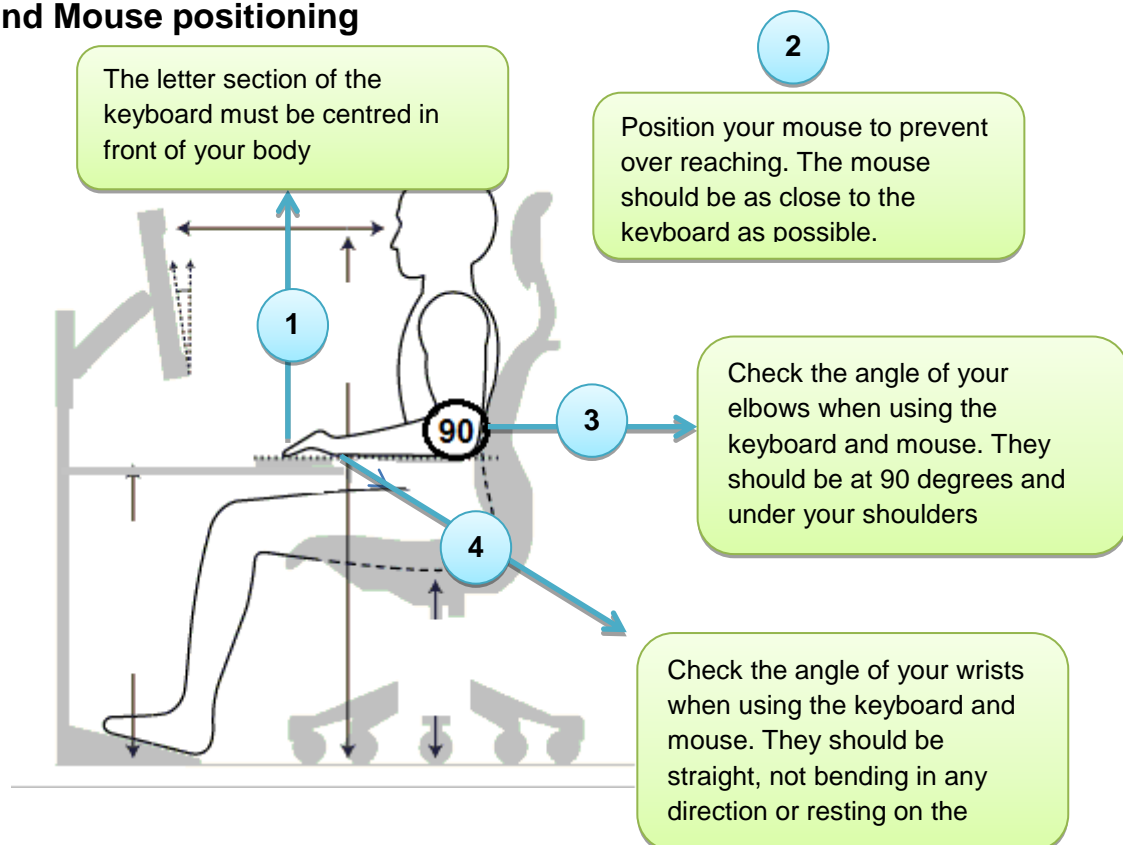
Step 1: Adjusting yourself to the correct height



Step 2 Adjusting your Chair



Step 3 Keyboard and Mouse positioning



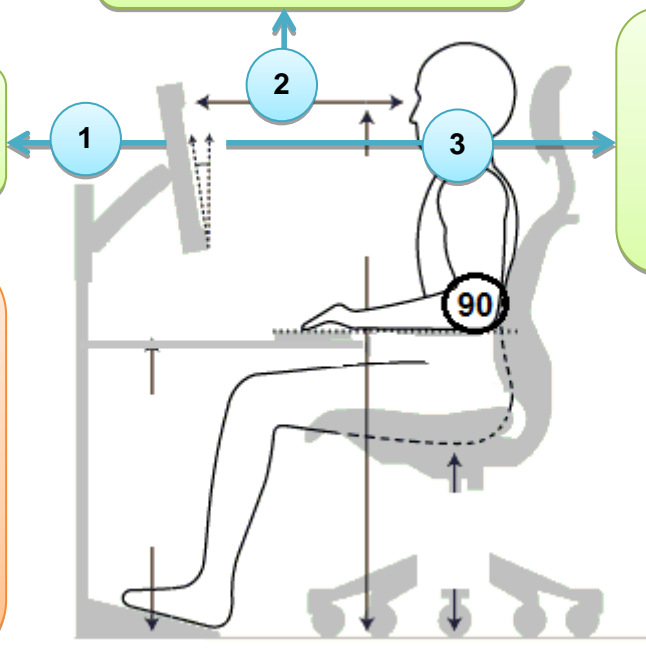
Step 4 Monitor adjustment and positioning

The top of the monitor should be at approximately eye level or slightly above.

The monitor must be centred in front of your body

The monitor should be approximately one arm's length away. Adjust for personal comfort. You should be able to read text without having to lean forwards.

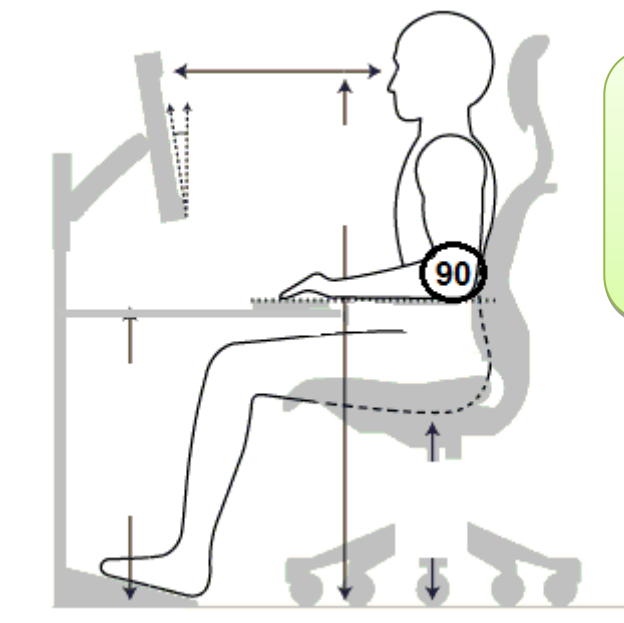
Note: If you are using more than one monitor you should position your primary monitor as per described and any other monitors should be arranged so they can be easily viewed without having to bend your neck



4

Your monitor should be positioned at right angles to light sources to prevent glare and avoid placing it directly in front or facing a window

Step 5 Under desk space



Ensure there is enough space under your desk to move your legs freely and ensure there are no obstructions preventing you moving as close to your desk as possible.

2. Equipment

2.1 Chairs

Chairs should be fully adjustable to accommodate different sized workers (with seat height, back rest height and back rest tilt adjustments) and should not tip or slip – a five-point base is the most stable. Castors should be used on carpet and glides or braked castors on hard surfaces. Arm rests are not recommended as they can prevent you getting as close to your desk as possible.

Seating Alternatives

Kneeling, Sit-Stand and Saddle Chairs

There are a number of different types of alternative office seating available on the market including kneeling, sit-stand and saddle chairs.

These types of seating are not necessarily better or worse than conventional ergonomic office seating, however they may not provide optimum support in a workplace where many hours are spent in sitting. Kneeling chairs will also cut off circulation to the lower legs if used for long periods and are not recommended for individuals who have knee problems.

There are no current guidelines or design standards available for alternative chairs; however it is recommended that these chairs are not used for constant sitting, and conventional chairs are recommended in the office environment. Should an individual at the UNSW wish to use an alternative office chair, they should first seek the advice of their treating practitioner.

Fitness balls

The fitness ball is not recommended for use as office seating due to:

- Loss of upright posture because there is not full seat and back support.
- Upright posture not being maintained during tasks that require reaching or moving around. Users are also unable to swivel or navigate around the workstation.
- The sitting surface of the fitness ball does not provide adequate support for the buttocks and thighs.
- Getting on and off or reaching from the ball may be a falling hazard.

The fitness ball may be used to provide postural breaks and do stretches or exercises during breaks from work.

2.2 Keyboard

Keyboard use

- The keyboard should be placed directly in front of the body to avoid twisting the neck and torso.
- The keyboard should be positioned in front of the computer monitor with the letters **G & H** approximately in line with your navel. This is particularly good positioning when doing a lot of keyboard work.
- The keyboard should be positioned according to the distance the forearms extend from the neutral position of the elbows by the side of the body.

- Arms should be parallel to the floor when placed gently on the keyboard. The seated elbow height should be a little higher than the height of the keyboard. Raise or lower the office chair to achieve this position.
- The slope of the keyboard should be as close to the flat position as possible. This is largely determined by what feels comfortable; however there should be a good straight alignment across the forearms, wrists and hands.

Providing a keyboard without a numeric pad can reduce the keyboard width and allow the mouse to be operated closer to the user.

Keyboard alternatives

Voice recognition software

Voice recognition software can be used to provide rest breaks from typing. The UNSW Health and Safety website provides a list of online voice recognition tools under the section Work Breaks located under Manual Tasks under the Hazards tab.

2.3 Mouse

The mouse should fit the user's hand and not cause unnecessary pressure on the wrist and forearm muscles. Ensure the mouse is not too large so that the wrist is in a neutral position during use.

Mouse use

- Mouse operation can be moved from left-handed to right-handed use to minimise strain on the one hand. Ensure that button on the right side of the mouse is always used for primary functions by clicking on start (bottom left side of screen), selecting mouse and changing button configuration to switch primary and secondary buttons. The mouse may also be customised in this area including double click speed, pointer speed and scrolling.
- Set the tracking speed of the mouse to a setting that suits you (access through Control Panel on computer).
- Hold the mouse gently when moving it over the mouse pad or desk.
- Take the hand off the mouse at frequent intervals.
- Use keyboard shortcuts where possible.
- If the task is primarily a mouse activity, move the mouse towards the middle of the desk and push the keyboard back.
- Position the mouse directly to the right or left hand side of the keyboard. Line the top of the mouse pad with the top edge of the keyboard as a visual cue to correct placement and always aim to keep the mouse on the mouse pad.

Mouse alternatives

Alternatives to the standard mouse are designed to change hand and arm postures and increase efficiency. They include a wide range of operations, including rollers, pens, balls, pads and glide points. The main difference between a mouse and these devices is that the hand and arm remain stationary while the wrist is at an angle and the fingers or thumb stretch. For long periods of use this way may cause finger, thumb or wrist discomfort. Lifting the hand off the keys while operating the pointing devices is preferable.

2.4 Wrist rests/ Gel Pads

Wrist rests are not recommended for use in the office environment. Gel wrist rests can cause wrist anchoring. When you rest on your wrists while typing/mousing, you can compress the blood vessels, tendons, and nerves that travel through your wrist. Resting your wrist for too long can potentially cause inflamed tendons and nerve entrapment. Anchoring your wrist can increase the

risks of a musculoskeletal disorder like carpal tunnel syndrome. Wrist rests are designed to provide support during pauses, when not typing (such as when reading from the screen).

2.5 Desks

Workstations should be designed so that workers can carry out their work in a comfortable, upright position with shoulders relaxed and upper arms close to the body. Different workers require different working heights so it is best to provide adjustable workstations to make the work height suitable for the person and the task.

Desks should be between 680 millimetres and 735 millimetres for a fixed height desk and there should be enough room under your desk to move your legs freely.

While working at your desk there should be enough room to complete computing and writing tasks in separate areas. AS4442 advises desks should be at least 1600mm width x 800mm depth.

Desk alternatives

Sit/Stand work platforms or desks

Sit/Stand work platforms and desks allow users to alternate between sitting and standing throughout the working day. **Sitting or standing for prolonged periods is unhealthy. Ensure prolonged sitting or standing is broken up by periodic movement throughout the day, preferably 1-2 minutes every 20 to 30 minutes. Frequent micro breaks improves your level of comfort, work performance, and reduces the risks of musculoskeletal injuries.** Ensure you are alternating between sitting and standing every 1-2 hours.

2.6 Laptops

Laptops are not designed to be used for long periods. If you are using your laptop for long periods

- Place your laptop on an adjustable stand, so you can view the screen at eye level or attach to external monitor
- Attach an external keyboard and mouse

2.7 Phone

If you are using your phone frequently you should consider using a headset to prevent awkward neck postures. Especially if you write notes or use your computer while talking on the phone.

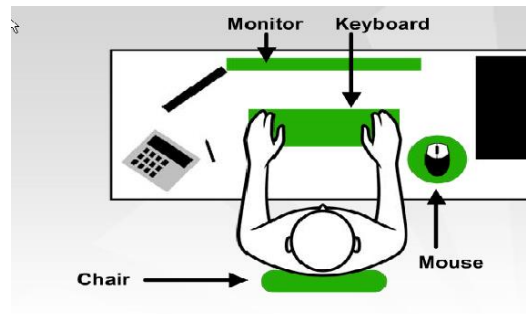
Your phone should also be positioned on your non-dominant side within easy reach. If the phone is used rarely then, it does not need to be positioned close.

2.8 Document holders

If you are reading from documents while typing you should use a document stand and locate the stand either directly under the monitor or off to the side on an angle. Other frequently used items should be within easy reach.

2.9 Equipment layout

The correct positioning of your equipment on your desk will help prevent injuries. Your monitor and letter section of your keyboard should be centred in front of your body, your mouse should be located to prevent overreaching and your chair should be centred as well.



3. Rest Breaks, Stretches and Exercises

3.1 Rest Breaks

It is very important to take rest breaks when working. Taking breaks will help in preventing injuries. There are a number of different types of breaks that allow for recovery or at least add variety to the workload. They include

- Varying your work. Performing different activities during the day.
- Structured breaks. Lunch and morning tea breaks.
- Unstructured breaks. Talking with a colleague or getting a drink of water.
- Work pauses. You should take regular pause breaks if you are performing a repetitive task.

You should take a 1 to 2 minute break every half hour and if you have been working 4 hours you should take a longer break of at least half an hour.

3.2 Stretches and Exercises

Holding sustained postures and/or performing repetitive tasks for prolonged periods can lead to musculoskeletal injuries. Performing stretches and exercises can promote blood flow to the body area which will reduce a build-up in toxins that can lead to injury.

- Perform the following exercises a few times a day
- Make sure you relax and perform them gently
- Hold the stretch and repeat as indicated
- STOP! if you feel discomfort

Neck

Side stretches hold for 5-10 secs each side repeat a few times



Forwards and backwards stretches hold for 5-10 secs each repeat a few times



Turn head to each shoulder; hold for 5-10 secs each repeat a few times



Shoulders

This stretch stretches the shoulders and wrists. Hold 10secs.



Hold 10secs each side.



Hold 5 secs. Repeat 2 times.



Hand and wrists

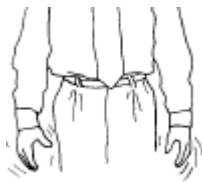
Open and close hands a few times



Hold 10secs.



Shake hands 10secs



Forearm

Hold 10 secs. Each side.

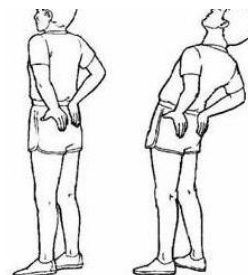


Upper and Lower back

Upper back
Hold 10 secs.



Lower back
Place hands on back of hips and lean back.
Hold 2 secs.
Repeat 5 times.



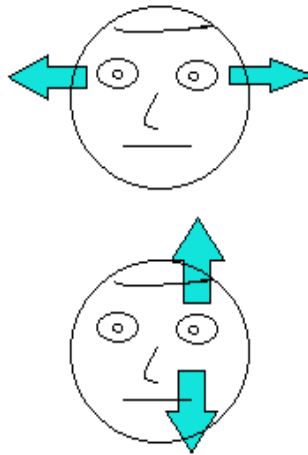
Eye exercises

When looking at your computer for long periods it is important to give your eyes a break.

You can do this by looking away from your monitor periodically. Focus on objects close to you and then objects further away.

And perform the exercises below.

Look to both
sides and look
up then down.
Repeat a few
times.



Remember

Get up and move around every 20-30mins. Go for a short walk e.g. instead of sending an email go for a walk to have a chat.