

Home Ergonomics

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many companies have had to move operations remotely, resulting in more people working from home. With the uncertainty of when operations may return to the workplace, home ergonomics is becoming a growing safety concern.

What is the Danger?

Working from home offers a similar comparison to the type of work found in an office. Often, this work may result in repetitive motions and awkward, static postures while performing duties. For this reason, Musculoskeletal Injuries (MSIs) are the most common type of injury.

MSIs are injuries that affect the human body's movement or musculoskeletal system (i.e., muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves, discs, blood vessels, etc.). Signs and symptoms of an MSI can appear suddenly or can occur gradually over time.

Signs and Symptoms of an MSI include:

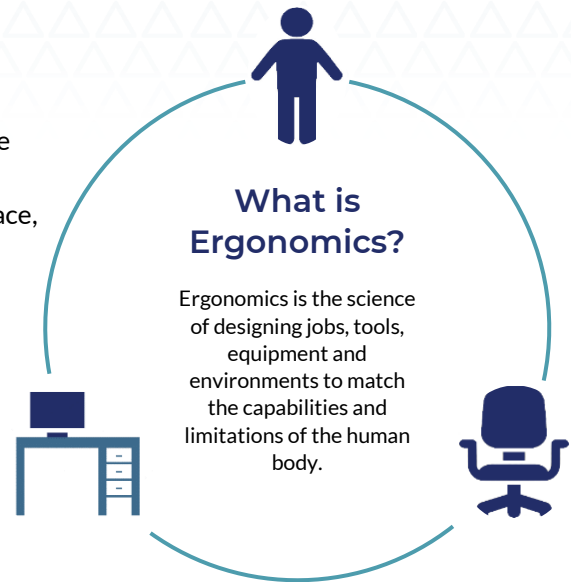
| Signs |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swelling • Redness • Difficulty moving a particular body part |

| Symptoms |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbness • Tingling • Pain |

Early signs and symptoms of MSIs can progress into conditions that can have long-term effects, such as the following:

| Conditions |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muscle strains to the neck, back, shoulder or legs • Tendinitis • Carpal Tunnel Syndrome |

If you are experiencing signs or symptoms of an MSI, please inform your supervisor. An MSI may be treated more effectively if it is discovered and reported early.





Safety Tips

Apply the following safety tips to your home workstation to improve home ergonomics.

- ✓ Ensure adequate back support so your ears are in line with the shoulders and hips.
- ✓ Shoulders are relaxed and level when using the keyboard and mouse.
- ✓ Hands are in line or slightly lower than your elbows.
- ✓ Arms are relaxed and wrists are in a neutral/straight position (not up, down, or to one side).
- ✓ Thighs are parallel to the floor and knees are at the same height as your hips.
- ✓ Adequate space beneath your work surface to move legs.
- ✓ Documents and equipment are positioned correctly.
- ✓ If working at home on a laptop, see if you can bring your external monitor, keyboard and mouse from your workplace. This will give you more flexibility in your at-home workspace.
- ✓ Vary your tasks to avoid static position and posture all day; take frequent mini breaks, get up and move around.

Demonstrate

Provide ergonomic tools and equipment to allow workers to work comfortably from home.

Review with workers what a proper ergonomic setup looks like. There are many online resources available to assist you with this.

Discussion

Review the 'Workstation Checklist – Ergonomic Setup' on the following page.

Workstation Checklist – Ergonomic Setup

Chair

| Preferred | Yes | No | If no, try the following | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| Thigh parallel to floor when seated | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise/lower chair height Add/remove footrest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add/remove footrest |
| Feet on floor | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise/lower chair height Add/remove footrest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit shoe heel height |
| 2-3 fingerbreadth between knee and front edge of seat | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use footrest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust seat depth |
| Adequate back support | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise/lower chair height | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain lumbar support pillow |
| Shoulders relaxed and level | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust/eliminate armrest Raise/lower chair height | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise/lower keyboard height Raise/lower workstation height |
| Elbows at 90° | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust/eliminate armrest Raise/lower chair height | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise/lower keyboard height Raise/lower workstation height |
| Seat is well padded | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use ergonomic seat cushion | |
| You know how to operate your chair | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review instruction manual | |

Desk

| | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| Desk height is equal to seated elbow height | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise/lower chair height | |
| Adequate space | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize desktop surface | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange cabinets to minimize body twisting |
| Minimal reaching above the shoulder | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stand to reach overhead binders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place frequently used binders on desk |
| Minimal reaching below the shoulder | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange cabinets to minimize body twisting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove clutter under the desk |

Keyboard

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| Relaxed arm position during use | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise/lower keyboard height | |
| Wrist in line with forearm | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check chair height Check keyboard height and tilt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain wrist support |
| Neutral wrist deviation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review typing skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain split keyboard |
| Relaxed fingers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relaxation exercises | |
| Upright torso | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust keyboard height Move closer to keyboard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise/lower chair height Adjust posture |
| Light touch for keyboard input | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review keyboard functioning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relaxation exercises |

Mouse

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| Easy reach | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move closer to work surface Position mouse closer to keyboard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust mouse sensitivity Use sensor mouse on split keyboard (if available) |
| Wrists in line with forearm | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust mouse height | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use mouse wrist pad |

Monitor and Documents

| Preferred | Yes | No | If no, do the following |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Head neutral position | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use computer/specific glasses Raise/lower monitor |
| Eyes looking forward | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position screen in front of you Position document in front or beside the monitor Make sure document holder is on the same side as your dominant eye |
| Monitor is just beyond reach when you stretch arm out directly in front | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust distance of monitor |
| Adequate back support | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise/lower chair height Obtain lumbar support pillow |
| Upper torso relaxed against chair back | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move monitor closer Adjust sitting posture |
| Document and monitor same distance and height from eyes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust monitor and/or document position |
| Glare minimized | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tilt monitor slightly down Adjust monitor brightness Close blinds Adjust lighting Use anti-glare screen |

Telephone

| | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Neck/head centered | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a headset |
| Easy reach | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place phone closer to you |

Job Variety

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Visual rest every 30 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look away from your monitor and focus on a distant object every 30 minutes |
| Regular stretch breaks | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move your back, neck and shoulder at least every 10 minutes |
| Varying tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate tasks within a job to minimize repetition |



Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation

Part 8 – Musculoskeletal Injuries

Workers Involved in this Safety Talk

Date: _____

| Name | Signature |
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