

# Health tip: Ergonomics and you

Ergonomics is the science of designing the job to fit the worker with the goal of eliminating discomfort or risk of physical injury.<sup>1</sup>

## Musculoskeletal disorders<sup>2</sup>

Proper ergonomics may help to reduce or prevent musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) which are disorders that affect the muscles, nerves, blood vessels, ligaments and tendons. Some examples of these disorders may include:

- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Tendinitis
- Rotator cuff injuries
- Epicondylitis (inflammation of the elbow)
- Muscle strains and low back injuries
- Trigger Finger (inflammation of the finger tendons)

## Signs and symptoms of MSD<sup>2</sup>

It is important to recognize the signs and symptoms of an MSD as early as possible to prevent serious injury or permanent damage.

People at risk of MSD may experience some of the following signs or symptoms:

- Numbness or a burning sensation in the hand
- Reduced grip strength
- Swelling or stiffness in the joints
- Pain in wrists, forearms, elbows, neck or back
- Dry, itchy, or sore eyes
- Blurred or double vision
- Aching or tingling
- Cramping
- Weakness<sup>2</sup>

Although these symptoms may not necessarily lead to a MSD, if experienced, you should seek an evaluation of the type of symptom and your current work environment.



### Tech devices<sup>4</sup>

- Sit up when reading or texting
- Keep devices at eye level to decrease neck and back stress
- Use hands-free device when possible

## Office ergonomics solutions<sup>3</sup>

- Place your monitor arm's length distance from your eyes
- Place keyboard to allow wrists and forearms to be in a straight line
- Maintain straight wrists when typing
- Keep hands below elbow level
- Use a chair that supports your spine
- Adjust chair height so thighs are parallel with the floor
- Keep feet supported on the floor or with a footrest
- Use a handsfree headset if possible
- Look 20 feet away from your monitor for 20 seconds every 20 minutes

## Lifting solutions<sup>5</sup>

- Stand close to the object you want to lift
- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, bend from your knees, not the waist
- Tighten your stomach muscles
- Lift with your leg muscles as you stand up

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<sup>1</sup> University of North Carolina, Workplace Safety. <https://ehs.unc.edu/workplace-safety/ergonomics/>. 2023. accessed August 2023.

<sup>2</sup> OSHA. <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/ergonomics>. 2023. Accessed August 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Mayo Clinic, Office Ergonomics: Your how-to guide. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/office-ergonomics/art-20046169>. May 2023. Accessed August 2023

<sup>4</sup> Know Your Back, 10 Tips for a Healthy Back. <https://www.spine.org/KnowYourBack/Prevention/Lifestyle-Choices/10-Tips-for-a-Healthy-Back>. 2023. Accessed August 2023.

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