

# The Facts



## OCCUPATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

### On Ergonomics While Working at Home

Ergonomics is all about enhancing worker productivity. The design of your workplace, the tools you use, and the work processes you put in place all work together to impact your ability to be productive at work. Poor ergonomics can contribute to muscle strain, muscle imbalance, and fatigue. It is important to still maintain proper ergonomics in your home office.

#### General Desk Ergonomics

- Adjust your chair height. Chair height and tilt should be adjusted so that your thighs are parallel to the floor.
- Your feet should rest flat on the floor or on a footrest. No dangling.
- Use an adjustable chair if possible.
  - Adjust your seat back. Your lower back (lumbar area) plus mid-back should be well-supported. Adjust the seat back height, angle and tilt tension accordingly and sit back in your chair.
- Work at a height where your elbows naturally fall flush with the desk/table. Keep elbows close to your sides.
- Avoid hunching your shoulders forward.
- Avoid screen glare. Do not position your monitor directly below light fixtures. Position monitors perpendicular to windows and other light sources.

#### Desktop Monitor Ergonomics

- Adjust your monitor so that the top of the screen is at eye level. This will allow you to scan the whole screen without having to move your head/neck,
- Place your mouse and keyboard on the same plane to avoid overreaching.
- Locate your mouse within easy reach, no more than 3"-4" from the keyboard. You should reach your mouse and use it by moving your elbow rather than your shoulder.
- Keep your wrists/hands/forearms aligned and shoulders relaxed.
- Keep your monitor about an arm's length away.
- Forearms should be parallel to the floor – adjust your keyboard tray or desk height accordingly.
- Your wrists should be straight and your hands in line with your forearms – adjust the height and position of the keyboard tray to keep wrists flat.

#### Helpful Hints for Home

- Use reams of paper or books to increase the height of your monitor/laptop or as a footrest to ensure your feet are resting flat.
- Get up and stretch at least every hour. Set timers throughout the day as reminders for stretch breaks.
- Take phone calls standing if possible.
- Stay hydrated.
- Establish a dedicated workstation at your home.
- Do **not** work from your bed, the couch, or on the floor.
- With supervisor approval, bring your office equipment to your home. (e.g. chair, keyboard, mouse, monitors)
- Every 20 minutes you spend looking at the computer screen, spend 20 seconds looking away. This will help reduce eye strain.
- Use a rolled towel as added lumbar support if needed.
- When setting up your home office use the ergonomics self-assessment tool on BioRAFT found under the inspections module. Find the assessment through this link- [BioRAFT at Clemson | Clemson University, South Carolina](#)

#### Laptop Ergonomics

- Use a wireless keyboard and mouse if possible.
- Position and angle the laptop screen so that you can see it with the least amount of neck deviation. Use books to raise laptop if needed.
- Refer above to the last two bullets for placement of the forearms and wrists.

Proper Desktop Position

