

# Gain better health through improved ergonomics

Ergonomics is the science that studies the design and arrangement of items people use and interact with most efficiently and safely. It is also referred to as human engineering.

Computer ergonomics is the study of how we interact with our computers. Scientists that study computer ergonomics, attempt to find solutions to strain, fatigue, and injuries caused by poor product design or workplace arrangement. Their goal is to create an overall comfortable and relaxed workplace environment.

Sitting at a computer for many hours a day, many people find themselves looking for a better way to work. Personally, my back hurts, my neck gets tight, and I often find that my legs fall asleep. So what can you do when your workstation is ergonomically wrong?

Setting Up Your Workstation: according to the ergonomic experts at the University of Michigan, your workstation should:

- Be adjusted to allow your arms to rest at a 90-degree angle to the keyboard
- Allow for the monitor and keyboard to be separated
- Have a chair that supports your back in an upright seated position with a slight arch that may or may not contain a lumbar roll for the lower back
- Position the monitor to be directly in front of you (at least 18 inches) and at eye level
- Keep feet flat on the floor with the legs in a parallel position, and for the vertically challenged, a footrest may be needed
- If using a hard-copy document, use a document holder to keep it at eye level

Since laptops are not designed for use over long periods of time, if possible, separate the monitor and keyboard. Place the laptop on top of books or some other device to raise it to eye level. Then, use an external keyboard that allows the elbows to retain their 90-degree angle while typing.

Keeping physically fit can also help to avoid, and even treat, problems and pains related to extended computer use. Build up core muscles to support the lower back while seated.

If you have constant pain, numbness, or any other symptoms that are persistent and do not go away, check in with your chiropractor immediately. A delay in seeking care may cause the problems to develop into serious medical conditions related to the back and joints.



*This healthy living information is provided by  
your Doctor of Chiropractic and the  
Idaho Association of Chiropractic Physicians (IACP) .*