Office Ergonomics

Information Session

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Aims of session

- Identify ergonomics risk factors in the office that can cause musculoskeletal disorders

- Provide information so you can reduce or eliminate risk factors at your workstation that can lead to musculoskeletal disorders

- Demonstrate the correct use of equipment to promote optimal postures

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What is Ergonomics?

Ergonomics involves designing:

- tasks
- jobs
- information
- tools
- equipment
- facilities and
- the working environment so work can be performed in a productive, comfortable and safe manner.

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What are the benefits?

Potential benefits of good office ergonomics practices include:

- reduction in work-related injuries

- increased productivity

- increased quality of work
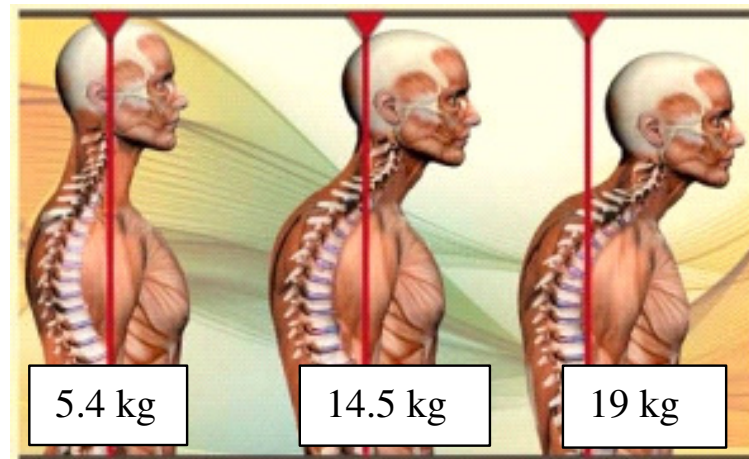
- reduced absenteeism

- increased morale.

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Good Posture

- Is critical to ensure the neck and spine are not carrying more weight than necessary.

- Poor posture – for every inch (2.5cm) the head moves forward, it's an extra 4.5kg weight on the spine.

5.4 kg   14.5 kg   19 kg

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What are the risks?

Ignoring ergonomics
principles can lead to
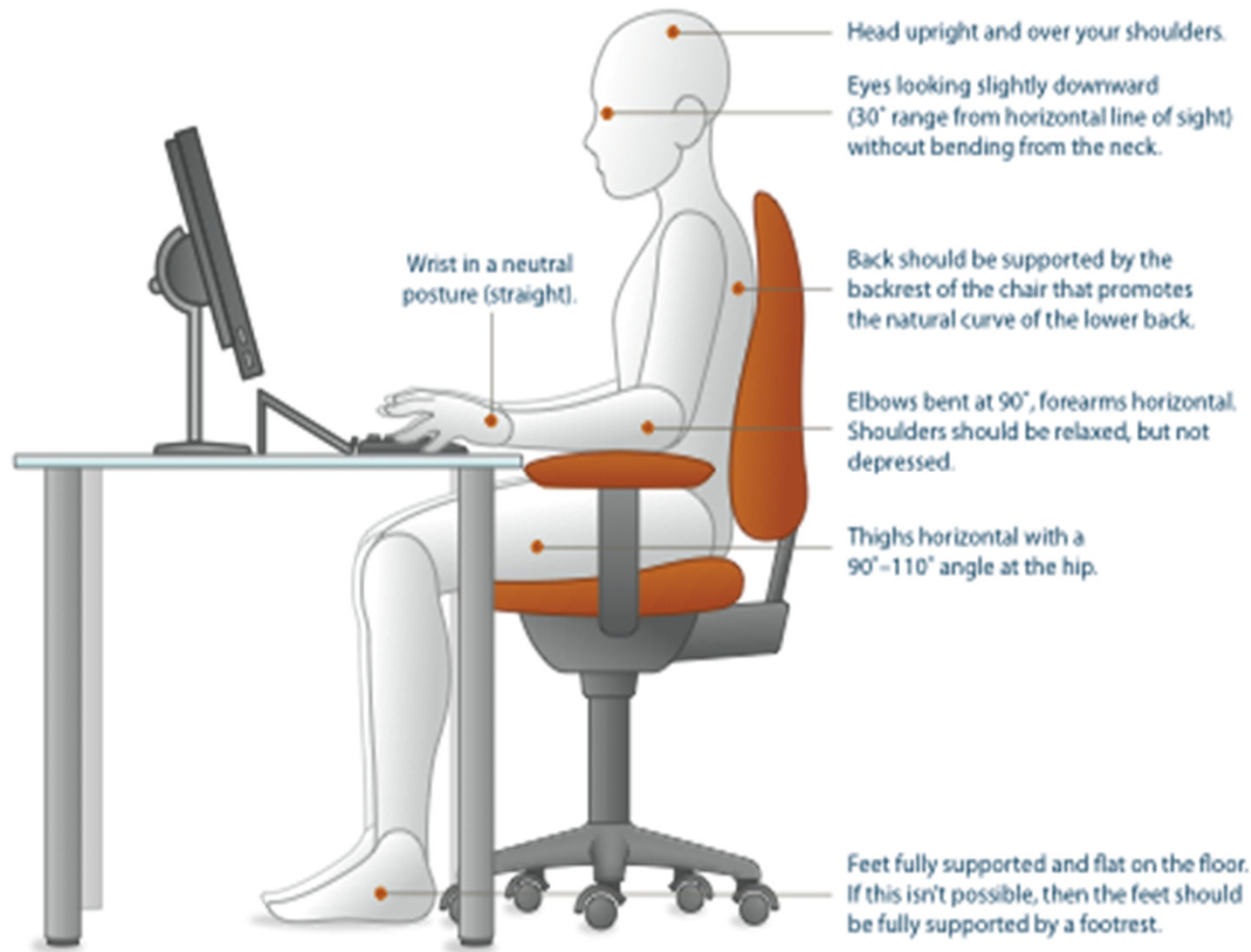musculoskeletal
disorders

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Musculoskeletal Disorders

- … are chronic disorders involving muscles, tendon and nerves

- …can be caused by or aggravated by various risk factors e.g.
  - repetitive motion
  - forceful exertion
  - awkward posture
  - environmental factors.

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Head upright and over your shoulders.

Eyes looking slightly downward (30° range from horizontal line of sight) without bending from the neck.

Wrist in a neutral posture (straight).

Back should be supported by the backrest of the chair that promotes the natural curve of the lower back.

Elbows bent at 90°, forearms horizontal. Shoulders should be relaxed, but not depressed.

Thighs horizontal with a 90°–110° angle at the hip.

Feet fully supported and flat on the floor. If this isn't possible, then the feet should be fully supported by a footrest.

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Chair

What to look for in a good chair…

- Back rest easily adjustable in height and angle
- provides lumbar support
- width is appropriate for the individual user
- seat depth is well fitted or adjustable
- five star castor base for stability
- breathable fabric.

Lumbar support

Knee height

Depth of seat

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Work Surface/Desk
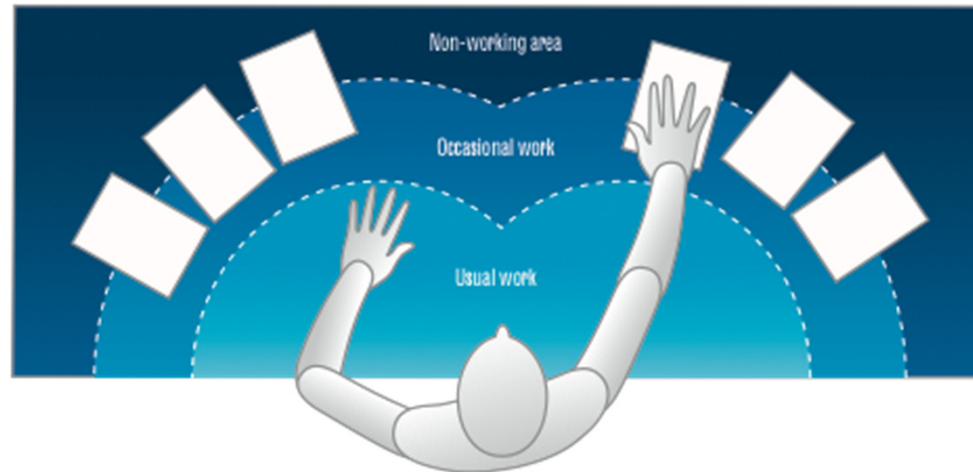
- Frequently used items (keyboard, mouse, phone) should be located in the 'usual work' area.

- Other items used should be located in the 'occasional work' area.

- 'Non-working' area should contain items that are stored / referenced occasionally. Change posture (e.g. stand if necessary) to retrieve these items to avoid over reaching.

Keyboard

- Keyboard should be 6 - 7 cm from the edge of desk

- Keyboard should lie flat or negatively inclined

- Short breaks of 30 - 60 seconds to relax hands

- Change activity after extended periods of keying

Awkward wrist posture

Correct wrist posture

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Mouse

- Position the mouse at the same level as the keyboard

- Changing the hand you use to control the mouse provides some variation for muscles

- Use key shortcuts where possible
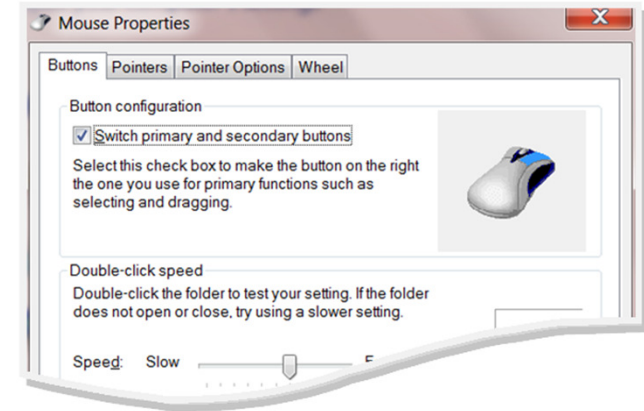
Computer Monitor

- Position the monitor at least an arm's length from you

- The monitor should be directly in front of you and your keyboard

- Position the top of the monitor just below eye level and tilt approximately 15 degrees

These parameters will differ dependent on individual vision and comfort

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Laptops

Use the same principles as for your workstation
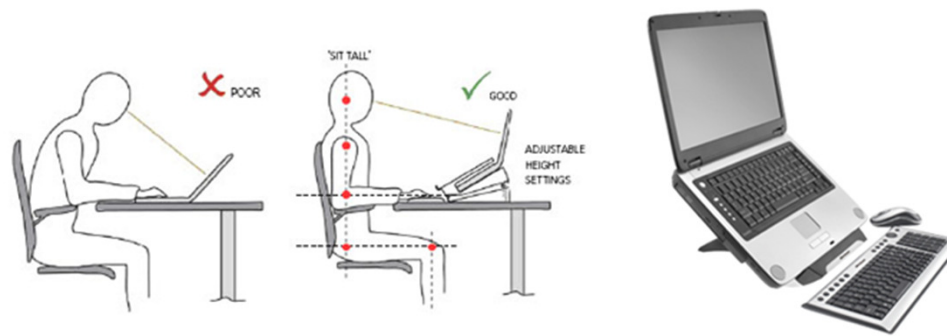
Docking stations or a separate keyboard and mouse are options to assist achieve these principles

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Accessories

Document Holder

- situated either directly between keyboard and monitor or to the side of monitor (at the same height as the screen)

Palm Rest/Wrist Support

- designed to raise the palm and keep wrist in neutral position
- should be used when taking short breaks <u>not</u> whilst keying or using the mouse

Telephone

- kept within easy reach
- use a headset if you use the telephone whilst keying or writing

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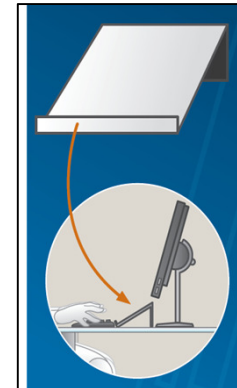
Lighting/Glare

- Check for glare by turning off your monitor when you are seated in your normal position.

- Use strategies to minimise glare from external or internal sources e.g. window coverings, local lighting

- Position your monitor so that your line of sight is parallel to the window

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Noise

Office noise is generally "annoyance" noise that is distracting and/or interferes with concentration.

•Rearrange the office layout so the noise generating activity or equipment is separated from quiet tasks

•Close office doors if numerous people are talking together

•Consider noise when purchasing new equipment - select equipment with low noise output

•Noise 'barriers' can help contain noise to a particular area e.g. fabric covered room dividers placed around a group of work stations

•Lower the volume settings on telephones including personal mobile phones

•Consider co-workers when using radios/playing music at your work station

•Be considerate with speaking volume.

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Regular Breaks

- Regular breaks from your workstation are MOST important

- Small break every hour

- Factor breaks into your normal work process

- Change posture, stand up and move around to relieve stiffness and tension.

NO POSTURE IS IDEAL INDEFINITELY

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What now?

Workstation Ergonomics Self Assessment

Departmental Documents

Office Ergonomics Guideline
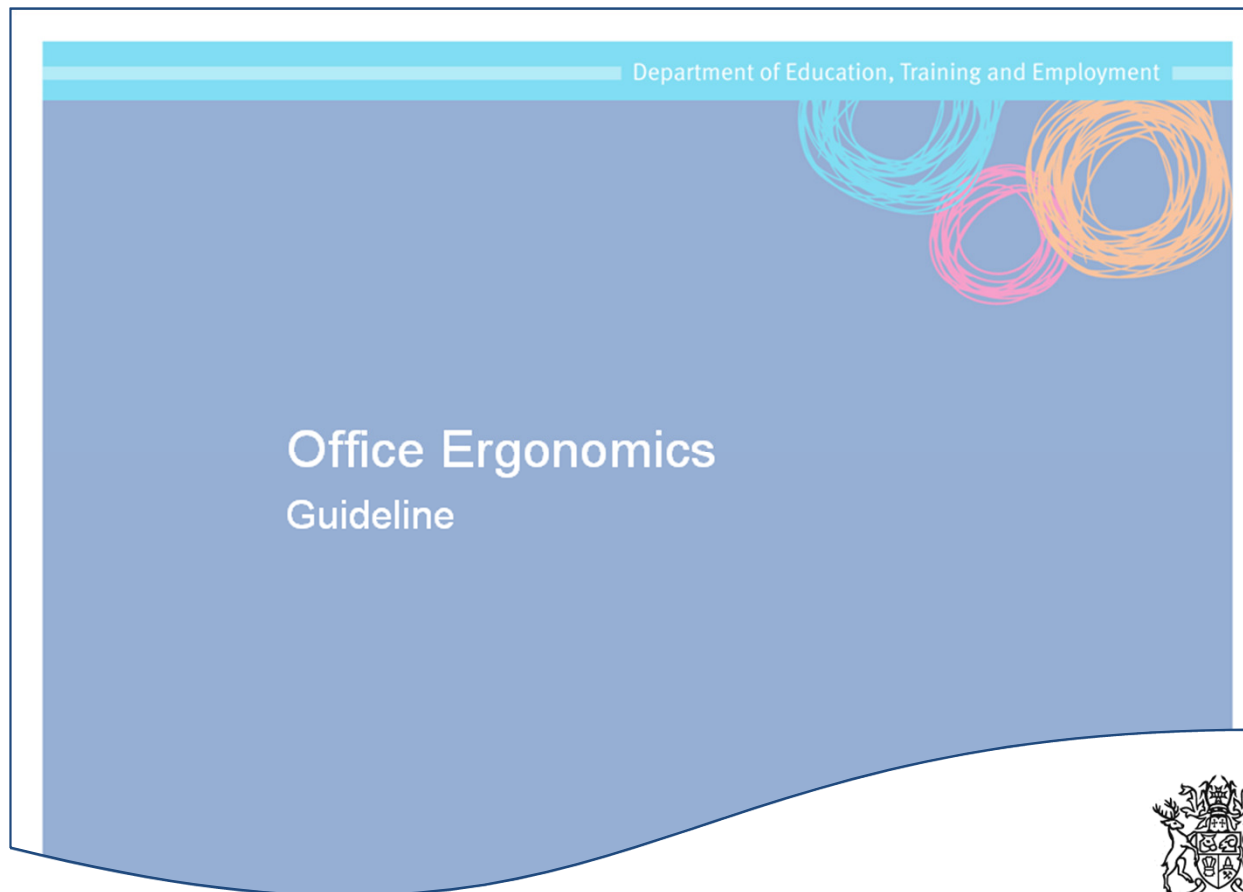
Individual Assessments

6. Flowchart - Workstation Ergonomics Assessments

- New Staff Member – induction activity
- Existing staff member using a new workstation
- Regular workstation ergonomics self-assessment
- Discomfort experienced while using the workstation

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Undertake Workstation Ergonomics Self-Assessment (link)

No adjustment or minor adjustments required

Adjustments required that require purchase of new equipment

Funded locally / Adjustments in place

Discuss requirements with supervisor/manager

· Discomfort continues,
· Potential for injury, or
· Injury is sustained

Staff member to seek medical advice. Continue to keep supervisor/manager advised of progress

Further advice or assistance required?

Possible

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