

# MSU Office Ergonomics: Workstation Self-Check

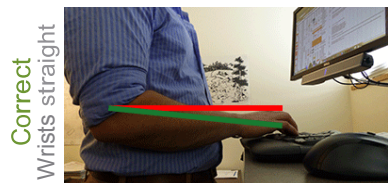
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Neutral Postures

To set up a workstation for optimal comfort and performance, it's helpful to understand the concept of neutral body postures. Neutral body postures are comfortable working positions in which your joints are naturally aligned. Working with the body in a neutral position reduces stress and strain on the muscles, tendons, nerves and joints - which can reduce your potential risk of developing a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD). After viewing the MSU Office Ergonomics online training course offered through the [MSU Safety & Risk Management website](http://www.montana.edu/wwwsrm/Ergonomics/Ergonomics.htm), use this checklist to review key areas of your workstation. Discuss your completed worksheet with your supervisor or manager to determine appropriate solutions for your workspace. For additional visual aids and assistance, please visit [www.montana.edu/wwwsrm/Ergonomics/Ergonomics.htm](http://www.montana.edu/wwwsrm/Ergonomics/Ergonomics.htm)



Chair	Is your chair properly adjusted?	Yes	No
	Adjust your seat height so that your feet are positioned flat on the floor and fully supported. (An adjustable footrest may assist with anchoring your feet.)		
	Your knees should be at the same height as your hips.		
	Thighs and hips should be parallel to the floor or angled slightly down.		
	The back support should make contact with the small curve in your lower back.		
	Hands, wrists and forearms should be straight, in-line and roughly parallel to the floor.		
	Place shoulders in a relaxed position with upper arms hanging at the side of the body.		
	Make sure to maintain a distance of 2 inches (or 3-4 finger widths) between the front edge of the seat pan & the backside of your knees. If the seat pan is too deep, adjust the chair or you may need a lower back pillow to help compensate.		
	When seated, torso and legs should be at a 90 degree angle or slightly greater angle to avoid leaning forward.		

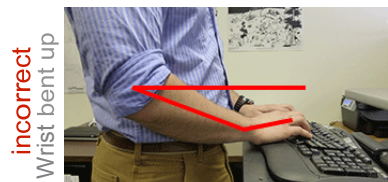


Correct  
Wrists straight

Keyboard	Is your keyboard properly positioned?	Yes	No
	Place the keyboard in a flat position directly in front of and aligned with the monitor. (Use keyboard like a piano, keep palms inline with fingers.)		
	Check to make sure the risers on the top underside of the keyboard remain in a flat position to avoid pitching keyboard on upward angle.		
	Your keyboard should be positioned at a height that allows your wrists to be in a straight line with your elbows.		
	Your elbows should rest comfortably and be anchored at your sides equal to a 90-100 degree angle (slight downward angle is ok if wrists aren't bent upward).		
	Make sure the keyboard tray (if in use) is flat or in a slight downward tilt away from you. This also helps your wrists stay straight and in line with your forearms.		
	If not using a keyboard tray, you may need to adjust the chair and/or desk height in order to avoid lifting shoulders upward/shrugging to access keyboard.		
	Use a soft palm rest (also known as a wrist rest) to minimize contact pressure with hard surfaces on the desk. It's important to only use these rests for periodic "micro breaks" and not as a means of support while typing.		



incorrect  
Wrist bent down

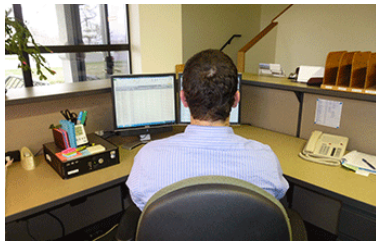


incorrect  
Wrist bent up

Mouse	Is your mouse properly positioned?	Yes	No
	The mouse placement at the same level as & next to the keyboard on right or left. (Consider left side use to reduce outward shoulder reach due to right side number keys on traditional keyboard.)		
	Use a mouse sized to fit your hand comfortably and keep your fingers relaxed and slightly curved. (There are many different mouse sizes and shapes.)		
	A soft palm rest can allow base of palm to rest on a soft surface and help keep wrist straight if needed. (Avoid direct pressure on wrist below base of palm when mousing.)		



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<b>Monitor</b>	<b>Is your monitor properly positioned?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	Position monitors directly in front of you and in front of the keyboard.		
	Ensure that your monitor is placed within arm's distance for viewing. Keep in mind that placing the monitor too far back might promote you to sit on the edge of your seat or lean forward to compensate for the distance.		
	The top 1/3 of the monitor screen should be at eye level. This minimizes potential for neck tilting forward or backward.		
	If you wear bifocal, trifocal, or progressive lenses you may need to lower the monitor to avoid tilting head back while viewing. (Computer specific glasses may be needed.)		
	Use a document holder to help you scan between the document and the screen. This may include a holder that is at the same height as your monitor or a holder that's placed between the keyboard and monitor.		

Incorrect Cradling Phone  
Correct Use Headset



<b>Phone</b>	<b>Is your phone properly positioned?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	Position the phone close to your workstation to avoid extended reaching and forward leaning while dialing and/or answering calls.		
	If you use the phone for extended periods of time, consider using a headset or your speaker phone. Using this equipment can help you avoid awkward postures such as holding the phone between your head and shoulder.		
	Headsets also make it easier on your neck when handling documents or using the computer while on the phone.		

## Workstation Layout

**Now that the main components of your work area have been arranged, let's focus on the proper positioning of the other desk items:**



Frequently used objects should be located up close in the "green" zone.

Objects that are used less often can be placed in the midrange area, the "yellow" zone.

Seldom used objects can be placed in the "red" zone. Move them into the "green" or "yellow" zone when you need to use them.

Use storage areas such as overhead shelves, filing cabinets, and desk drawers for items that you use infrequently. Avoid storing items under your desk, which can take up leg space or strain your back when you retrieve them.

## Additional Comfort Factors

**For additional workstation comfort consider the following:**

To avoid eye strain, adjust sources of area lighting (brightness & direction) or use task lighting to minimize glare on monitors. Glare reducer films can also be utilized on monitors to assist with viewing comfort.

Alternate job tasks throughout your work day. This will reduce cumulative fatigue & allow different sets of muscles to be used with different postures. For example, if right handed, have left hand perform some duties instead of right hand.

Take periodic micro breaks, to rest and relax body parts being used. Micro breaks = 10-60 second short stretch breaks, recommended every 60 minutes for computer users and static or repetitive work tasks.

Apply all of the above ergonomic principles for other work areas – telecommuting, lap-tops, iPads/tablets, or standing workstations.

## Additional Ergonomics Resources:

[www.montana.edu/wwwsm/Ergonomics/Ergonomics.htm](http://www.montana.edu/wwwsm/Ergonomics/Ergonomics.htm)

994-7384 or 994-1675