

## Workstation Design

Workstation design can have a big impact on your overall health and well being. Some problems have already been discussed, but there are a multitude of other discomforts which can result from ergonomically incorrect computer workstation set-ups. For example, poor chairs and/or bad posture can cause lower back strain; or a chair that is too high can cause circulation loss in legs and feet.

**The chair** is actually a very important part of a comfortable workstation. You want a chair that is lightly padded or upholstered. Adjust the height so that the backs of the knees are not in contact with the seat, and your feet are flat on the floor or footrest. Adjust the back of the chair so that it presses against the small of the back. If the chairback is not adjustable, some people may find it comfortable to use a small pillow for support instead.

Below is a diagram that outlines the basics of an ergonomically **correct** workstation.

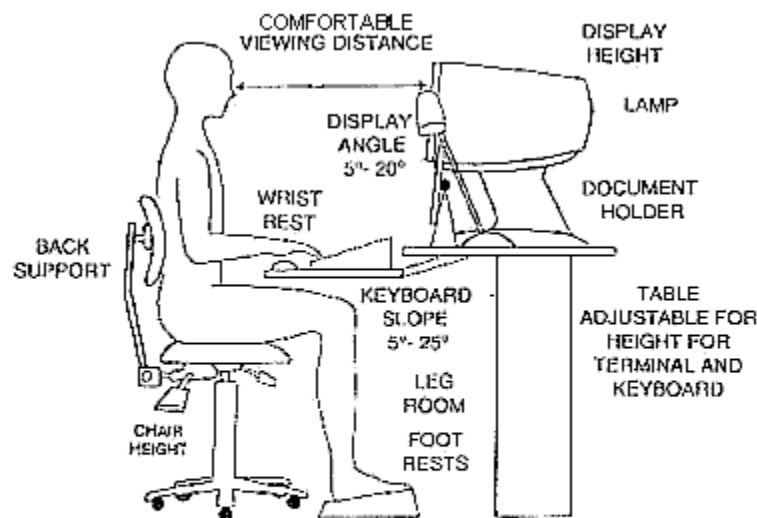


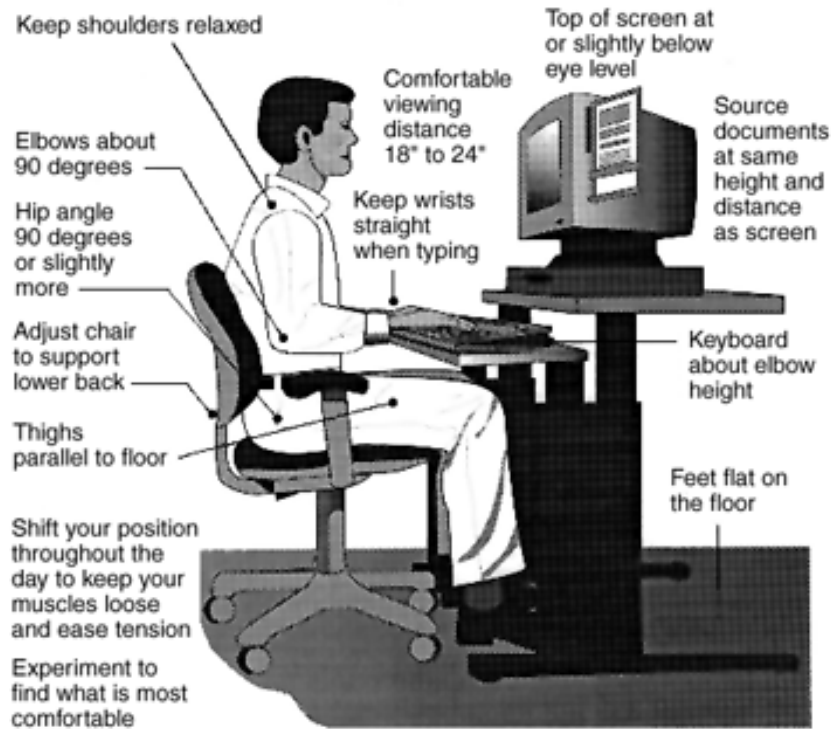
Diagram from "Ergonomics and VDT Use," flyer prepared by the Library of Congress Collections Services VDT Ergonomics Committee, 1991-92.

It is important to listen to the signals your body sends to you. If you find that your shoulders ache after a long day at the computer, see how you are holding your shoulders while you are working. Are you holding them up to keep your wrists at a comfortable angle? If so, maybe you need to raise your chair up so you can relax your shoulders while maintaining a comfortable angle for your wrists. If that places an uncomfortable pressure on the back of your legs because of the chair edge, get a footrest. Your body will tell you where the problems are. You simply need to analyze what you are doing and correct potential problems.

### A Quick Checklist:

- Sit directly in front of monitor and keyboard.
- Make sure the top of the screen is at eye level.
- Check for glare - close blinds, reposition monitor, place a shade over the screen, install a glare shield or parabolic light diffusers on ceiling.
- Maintain an approximately 90-degree angle in elbows.
- Keep wrists straight and aligned with forearm.
- Sit "snugly" in chair to keep lower back well supported.

- Keep arms close to body when typing or using mouse.
- Move entire hand/wrist area when operating a mouse.
- Bring frequently used items close to work area to avoid overreaching and repetitive stretching.
- Place feet firmly on the floor or footrest.
- Move yourself around the work area using your feet, rather than pulling with your hands.
- Allow adequate leg room under workstation for stretching and periodic position changes.



- Keep your head balanced naturally over your shoulders (not protruding in front of your body).
- Keep your shoulders relaxed, not hunched.
- Keep your forearms and thighs parallel to the floor.
- Sit back in your chair for support (not on the front edge).
- Adjust the back of your chair for support.
- Settle your feet on the floor or footrest.