



# Abu Dhabi Occupational Safety and Health System Framework (ADOSH-SF)

ADOSH-SF Technical Guideline  
Ergonomics in an Office Environment

Version 4.0

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## 1. Introduction

- (a) With advancements in technology, more and more workers are using computer workstations to complete their daily work tasks. This has led to an increase of eyestrain, neck, shoulder and back discomfort and more serious musculoskeletal injuries or disorders.
- (b) Often when employers undertake risk management, the office environment can be overlooked as it is considered as low risk, however poor set up of the office and more importantly individual workstations can lead to a number of ongoing injuries and health issues.
- (c) It is estimated that the average office worker will spend over 1700 hours a year sitting at their workstation, that equates to 6 ½ hours per day. If the workstation is poorly set up for the individual or the office environment badly designed, that can expose employees to a high level of risk that is easily managed, often with little effort.
- (d) Ensuring that good ergonomics have been considered as part of designing or setting up an office is an important part of maintaining your employees health. Injuries related to poor ergonomics in the workplace account for a significant portion of all lost time injuries globally.
- (e) In the majority of cases, the focus on setting up a workstation will be around the monitor, however there are many other factors that can affect the health of your employees and must be considered during any assessment.
- (f) The purpose of this document is to provide employers with guidance on how to provide personal workstations that are fit for purpose and have been assessed to suit the individual's needs.

## 2. Definitions

- (a) All definitions related to the ADOSH-SF are held within the *ADOSH-SF - Glossary of Terms*, however key definitions related to this guidance document are listed below:
- (i) Ergonomics: The science of adapting the job and/or the equipment and the human to each other for optimal safety and productivity;
  - (ii) Musculoskeletal disorders/injuries (MSD's/MSI's): injuries or pain in the human musculoskeletal system, including the joints, ligaments, muscles, nerves, tendons, and structures that support limbs, neck and back;
  - (iii) Display Screen Equipment (DSE): is defined as 'any alphanumeric or graphic display screen, regardless of the display process involved'. This type of equipment can be found in many areas of business, with the most common use being word processing.
  - (iv) Workstation: an assembly comprising of screen or other inputting device, printer, modem, desk chair etc. Also the immediate work environment around the workstation; and
  - (v) User: any employee who habitually uses DSE as a significant part of their normal work.

### 3. Common injuries

- (a) There are a number of commonly recognized injuries or disorders associated with the use of poorly designed workstations, however it is important to understand that not all of these are clearly visible or obvious to you as an employer or your employees. Health issues may be overlooked or not linked with the actual tasks they are undertaking.
- (b) Incorrect use of DSE or poorly designed workstations or work environments can lead to problems in:
  - (i) neck;
  - (ii) shoulders;
  - (iii) back;
  - (iv) arms;
  - (v) wrists and hands; and
  - (vi) fatigue and eye strain.
  - (vii) Posture
- (c) The causes of health problems may not always be obvious but can often be categorized as:
  - (i) physical (musculoskeletal) problems;
  - (ii) visual fatigue; and
  - (iii) mental stress.

#### 3.1. Physical risks

- (a) The term musculoskeletal disorders/injuries (MSDs) is used to describe a number of conditions such as carpal tunnel or tendonitis (including swelling - tenosynovitis). These conditions are also often referred to as repetitive strain injuries (RSI). Other terminology can include:
  - (i) work-related upper limb disorders (WRULDs);
  - (ii) overuse injuries; and
  - (iii) cumulative trauma disorder.
- (b) The symptoms of these can come in many forms however some of the more common ones are listed below:
  - (i) Pain in the fingers, wrists, or other parts of the body. Pain can range from dull aching pain to sharp stabbing pain and even a burning sensation;
  - (ii) Tingling or numbness, particularly in the hands or fingers;
  - (iii) Swelling, inflammation, or joint stiffness;
  - (iv) Loss of muscle function or weakness;
  - (v) Decrease in grip strength
  - (vi) Discomfort or pain in the shoulders, neck, or upper/lower back;
  - (vii) Extremities turning white or feeling unusually cold;
  - (viii) Muscle tightness, cramping, or discomfort;
  - (ix) Clumsiness or loss of coordination;
  - (x) Range of motion loss; and

- (xi) Discomfort when making certain movements.
- (c) These are progressive conditions and, in most cases, have various factors that combine to result in the RSI. These can cause injury to the nerves, muscles and tendons in the fingers, hands, wrists, arms, elbows, shoulders, and neck, which if ignored, may lead to long-term damage.
- (d) They can be caused by two factors, primary and secondary. There are primary factors that can affect anybody, such as:
  - (i) a poor ergonomically set up workstation
  - (ii) long periods of work without adequate breaks
  - (iii) sustained overuse from too much repetitive movement
  - (iv) poor posture
  - (v) excessive workload
  - (vi) some patterns of work
  - (vii) a cold working environment
  - (viii) vibration.
- (e) Secondary factors related to the individual that may make them more susceptible such as
  - (i) age
  - (ii) intrinsic strength
  - (iii) general health (which may contribute to differing levels of tolerance to repetitive strain).
- (f) Women can suffer from pain or weakness in their wrists during pregnancy, usually in the later months caused by fluid retention, putting more pressure on the carpal tunnel.

### 3.2. Visual fatigue

- (a) Working with computers or display screen equipment does not cause permanent damage to the eyes, however can be visually demanding and long spells of use can lead to tired eyes, discomfort, temporary short-sightedness and headaches. It can also make someone aware of eyesight problems they have not noticed before.

### 3.3. Mental stress

- (a) Stress makes muscles and soft tissues tense up, and when they tense up, they are more likely to be injured. Both physical and social stressors at work may contribute to this process.

## 4. Risk Assessment

- (a) The first step to ensuring robust ergonomics in an office environment is to analyze the work space you are providing your employees. What type of work is done there? What is the physical landscape like? Analyzing where potential problems may lie and applying the appropriate office ergonomic procedures should be your goal during this phase.
- (b) As an employer you have a duty to undertake robust risk management for all your undertakings, including those within the office environment. The risk assessment you undertake must comply with the requirements of *ADOSH-SF - Element 2 - Risk management* and *ADOSH-SF - CoP 14.0 - Manual handling and Ergonomics*.
- (c) Further to your general risk assessment, you should also undertake a specific assessment of each workstation to ensure that users are not exposed to risks caused by individual factors.
- (d) As with all risk assessments, the level of individual assessment should be appropriate to the nature of the tasks undertaken and the complexity of the workstation. For many office tasks, the assessment can be a judgement based on responses to a simple workstation assessment. However, for complex situations, for example where safety of others is a critical factor, a more detailed assessment may be appropriate.
- (e) Where a workstation is used by more than one member of staff, whether simultaneously or in shifts, it should be analyzed and assessed on an individual basis. For example if a very tall and a very short worker are sharing a workstation, the assessor should check the chair has a wide enough range of adjustment to accommodate both of them, and that a footrest is available when required.
- (f) Issues that should be considered as part of a simple user checklist for a workstation include:
  - (i) Desk;
  - (ii) Chair;
  - (iii) Monitor;
  - (iv) Keyboard;
  - (v) Mouse;
  - (vi) Lighting;
  - (vii) General environment; and
  - (viii) Software.
- (g) The level of detail within each section should be appropriate to the risks and tasks being undertaken. Example checklists are included in included within Appendix 1 & 2 of this document for the user to undertake a self-assessment of their workstation and body discomfort, however many entities now use online assessments. In many cases, the user must complete the assessment upon logging onto a workstation or at pre-determined timescales set by the entity.

#### 4.1. Review of assessments and control measures

- (a) As with all risk assessments, you must ensure that you review the findings and implement any control measures that are required to reduce the risks identified.
- (b) For the majority of office workers, little action will be required, however each assessment should be reviewed and where issues have been identified by the user, a separate more detailed assessment should be undertaken with the individual.
- (c) It is also good practice to review individual assessment at least annually to ensure that conditions remain the same.
- (d) Assessments should also be reviewed following significant change such as:
  - (i) a major change to the software used;
  - (ii) a major change to any of the equipment (screen, keyboard, input devices, etc);
  - (iii) a major change in workstation furniture;
  - (iv) a substantial increase in the amount of time required to be spent using DSE;
  - (v) a substantial change in other task requirements (for example greater speed or accuracy);
  - (vi) if the workstation is relocated (even if all equipment and furniture stays the same); and
  - (vii) if major features of the work environment, such as the lighting, are significantly modified.
- (e) It is also good practice to keep an ongoing record of all assessment undertaken in some form of register, this will help you as an employer to review any future issues or look at any emerging trends that may come out collectively from the assessments.



## 5. Training and Information

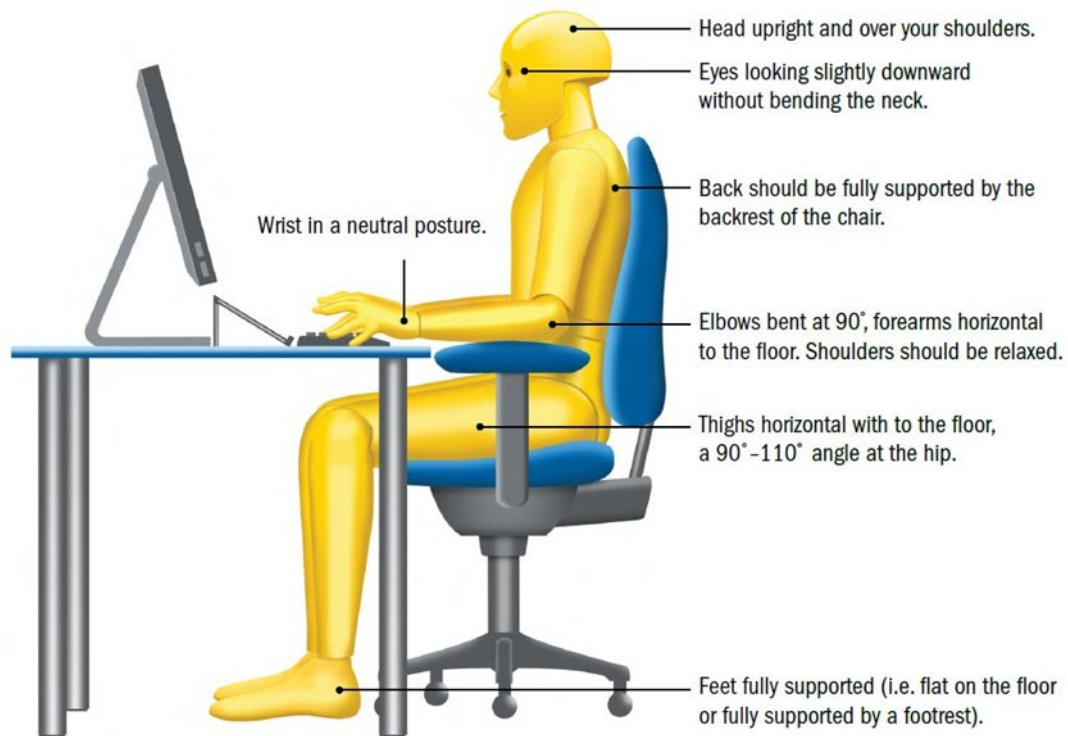
- (a) As an employer, you have a duty under *ADOSH-SF - Element 5 - Training, Awareness and Competency* to provide your employees with training for the task they are required to undertake. This also includes ensuring they are competent to set up and use workstations as required.
- (b) Training should also be adapted to the requirements of the particular tasks, and also to the user's skills and capabilities. Training should also be refreshed on a regular basis and be updated as the hardware, software, workstation, environment or job are modified.
- (c) The level and detail of the training that you provide should be in line with the risks that are present, however should include as a minimum the following issues:
  - (i) Hazards and risks associated with the task they are undertaking;
  - (ii) Associated injuries or health issues with the improper use of workstation equipment, together with information on what to look out for as early warning of problems;
  - (iii) Arrangement in place to report any health issues or problems;
  - (iv) Information on how to correctly set up and use the equipment provided, such as chairs, desk, monitors etc;
  - (v) Information on what additional equipment is available to assist the user set up the workstation correctly;
  - (vi) Training on how to use the software provided for the role;
  - (vii) How to correctly undertake a user assessment on the individual workstation;
  - (viii) Information on the need to take regular breaks from continual use of workstations and the benefits of doing so; and
  - (ix) Suggested exercises or other actions that can assist the user reduce the risk of potential health issues.
- (d) Any training that is provided should be recorded as per the requirements of *ADOSH-SF - Element 5 Training, Awareness and Competency*.

## 6. Setting up a Workstation

- (a) Office work today involves a lot of time spent sitting at a desk. While initially this may appear harmless and low risk, poor ergonomic set up has the potential to damage cause ongoing health issues. As highlighted above, the majority of injuries associated with poor ergonomics are not immediate and happen over a period of time, hence most of your employees may not realize this until it is too late.
- (b) Easily overlooked mannerisms such as slouching and tensing your shoulders can be attributed as the root cause for more serious office-related injuries such as pinched nerves, headaches, and wrist injuries.
- (c) There are many aspects to consider when setting up workstations for employees, not only the equipment that is provided, but also the general environment. Issues such as noise, lighting and storage can lead to a poorly set up workstation.
- (d) The information below will go through each element and highlight some of the key requirements that need to be considered. This information could also be used as part of providing your employees with information and training on how to correctly set up a workstation.

### 6.1. The Chair

- (a) The chair provided is probably one of the most important pieces of equipment when looking at workstations, however providing an ergonomic chair will not benefit your employee if they do not know how to adjust it correctly. Below are some of the things that should be considered when purchasing chairs for your employees:
  - (i) Provides lumbar support;
  - (ii) Height can be adjusted;
  - (iii) Width is appropriate for the individual using the chair;
  - (iv) Backrest is adjustable;
  - (v) Seat depth - well-fitted or adjustable;
  - (vi) Adjustable or removable armrests;
  - (vii) Five-prong base; and
  - (viii) Breathable fabric.



**Figure 1: ideal posture when working at a workstation**

- (b) Every person is different and it is essential that chairs are fully adjustable to allow your employees to set up their workstation to their individual needs.

### 6.1.1. Height

- (a) One of the first things to look at when setting up your workstation is the height of the chair. The ideal height for a chair when sitting is around the height of the knee cap when standing.
- (b) The chair should be adjusted so that it is approximately at knee height then once the employee is sitting, it should be adjusted it to the correct level. When sitting, their feet should be firmly on the floor with the lower leg and thigh at a 90° angle.
- (c) If the employee is unable to rest their feet firmly of the floor, a footrest should be considered as additional equipment to provide support. The footrest should be adjusted to be the same height as the distance between their feet and the ground. Footrests should be stable and secure so they do not slide when their feet are in contact and have a non-slip surface. They should also be adjustable between 10-20°.
- (d) Once the chair is positioned at the correct height, the seat pan should then be adjusted according the length of the person's thighs. The employee should sit with the back firmly against the backrest and their feet on the floor. A minimum space of around 2 to 3 fingers width between the knee and the front of the seat pan should be present and at least two thirds of the thigh should be supported by the seat pan.

### 6.1.2. Back Support

- (a) The majority of chairs that can be purchased will have some form of lumbar support already incorporated into the design. This should also be adjustable to improve support and comfort for your employees.
- (b) The backrest should be adjusted so that it supports the natural curve of the spine. The tilt of the back support should allow the user to sit with their upper body slightly reclined (110° is usually recommended).

### 6.1.3. Armrests

- (a) The armrests on the chair will provide support for the upper part of the forearm, taking pressure off the user's shoulder and back.
- (b) The armrest should be adjusted to elbow height (as shown in fig1.) If the armrest is adjusted too high for the user, this can cause the shoulders to shrug which in turn can cause discomfort for the user. In addition, if the armrest is too low, the shoulders will slump which can affect the user's posture.
- (c) It is important to ensure that once the armrest is adjusted correctly for the user, the chair can still be drawn close enough to the desk.

## 6.2. The Work Surface

- (a) Your employees will spend the majority of their working day at their desk or work surface, so it is vitally important that consideration is given to ensuring it is fit for purpose and can be adjusted to suit the user.
- (b) It is important that prior to purchasing desks and office furniture, time is taken to check the space available within your office. Ensure that you consider the locations of electrical points, light switches and windows so these are not accidentally blocked. Also ensure that when all the furniture is in situ, sufficient space is available for storage and for users to move freely around in the office. Poor planning at this stage can lead to an office feeling overcrowded and cramped.
- (c) Points that should be considered when purchasing desks should include:
  - (i) Work surface should be non-reflective;
  - (ii) Weight that the desk will hold;
  - (iii) Are adjustable height options available;
  - (iv) Option to have standing / sitting adjustable desks;
  - (v) Option to install keyboard tray
  - (vi) Desks have adequate leg room for users once in situ; and
  - (vii) Work surface is large enough to accommodate the required equipment.

### 6.2.1. Height

- (a) In the same manner as a chair, the work surface should be set up to suit the individual users. The height of the work surface should be at the same level as the users elbow when they are in the ideal sitting position.
- (b) The majority of modern work surfaces have some level of height adjustability within them, however if this is not present, then use other means to bring the work surface to the ideal height. Stable supports can be used to raise the height or the chair can be raised if the work surface is too high. This may also require footstools for users.
- (c) A keyboard tray can be a useful addition to the work surface to help bring the keyboard and mouse to the correct level for the user. The tray must be height and tilt adjustable, have sufficient room for both the keyboard and mouse and importantly not compromise legroom for users.

### 6.2.2. Organizing the work surface.

- (a) With the amount of time that your employees will spend at their desks, it is important that they are aware of how to correctly organize the workspace they have. Organizing the workspace correctly will help employees maintain good posture whilst sitting at their desk, also by placing items that are not frequently used out of reach will encourage employees to get out of their chair, which in turn will help blood circulation.
- (b) A good rule to use when organizing the workspace is the amount that employees will use an item. So the more they use something the closer it should be to the employee. Fig 2 below demonstrates how to set up an employee's workspace.

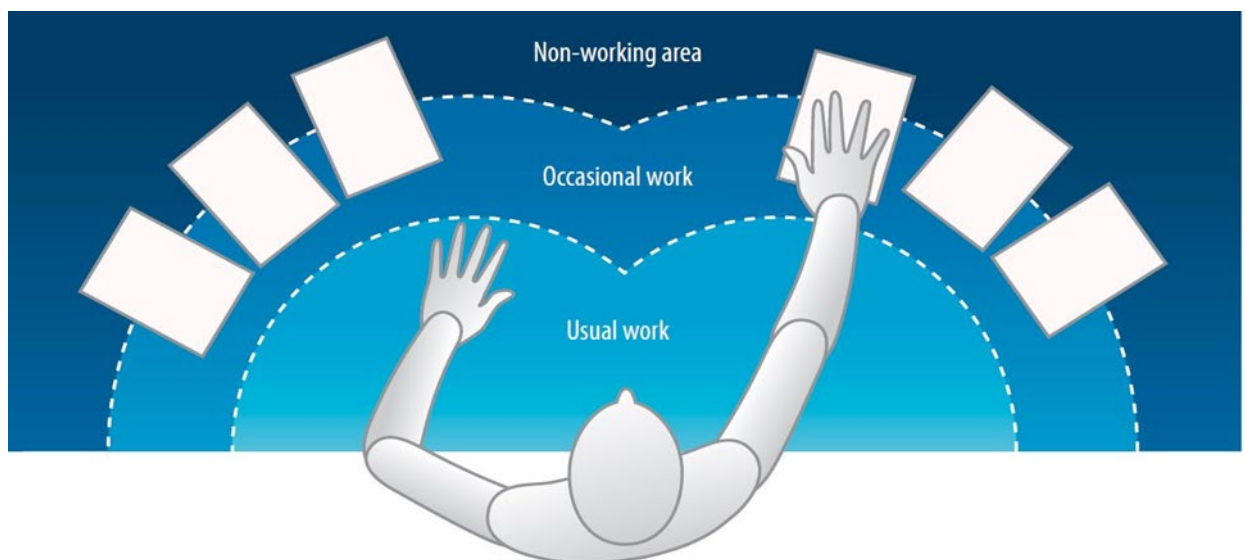


Fig 2 - Organizing the workspace

### 6.3. Display Screen Monitor

- (a) The display screen monitor is the center of all users' workstations and is the focus of attention throughout the day. Improperly positioning the monitor can cause users to incorrectly adjusting their body position, which can lead to ongoing health issues or injuries.
- (b) When you are purchasing monitors for employees there are a number of factors that you should consider to ensure the correct set up. These will vary between different users and different roles, dependent on the time spent. Factors that should be considered include:
  - (i) Size of the screen required;
  - (ii) Do users require a dual monitor or single screen;
  - (iii) Adjustability of the monitor;
  - (iv) Need for monitor arms or additional mounting; and
  - (v) Screen resolution.
- (c) Once you have purchased the correct monitor for your users, then consideration needs to be given to the placement of the monitor. There are two main issues to be considered when positioning a monitor correctly for individual users:
  - (i) Distance; and
  - (ii) Height / Viewing angle.

#### 6.3.1. Distance

- (a) As highlighted earlier, all users are different and as such so will the distance they require the monitor to be placed away from them on their desk. The distance required will also be affected by the user's eyesight and the size of the monitor they are using.
- (b) In general, the monitor should be placed directly in front of the employee at a distance of around 60cm to 90cm, or around one arm's length, in front of their eyes. A good guide to placing the monitor the correct distance is to position it as far away as possible whilst still be able to easily read the smallest font on the screen.

### 6.3.2. Height and Viewing Angle

- (a) The height of the monitor is also very important. Normally the top of the monitor should be aligned with the user's eyes. The screen then should be tilted approx. 15° away from the user. This will allow the person to more naturally look at the screen. An example of the monitor position is shown below in Fig 3.

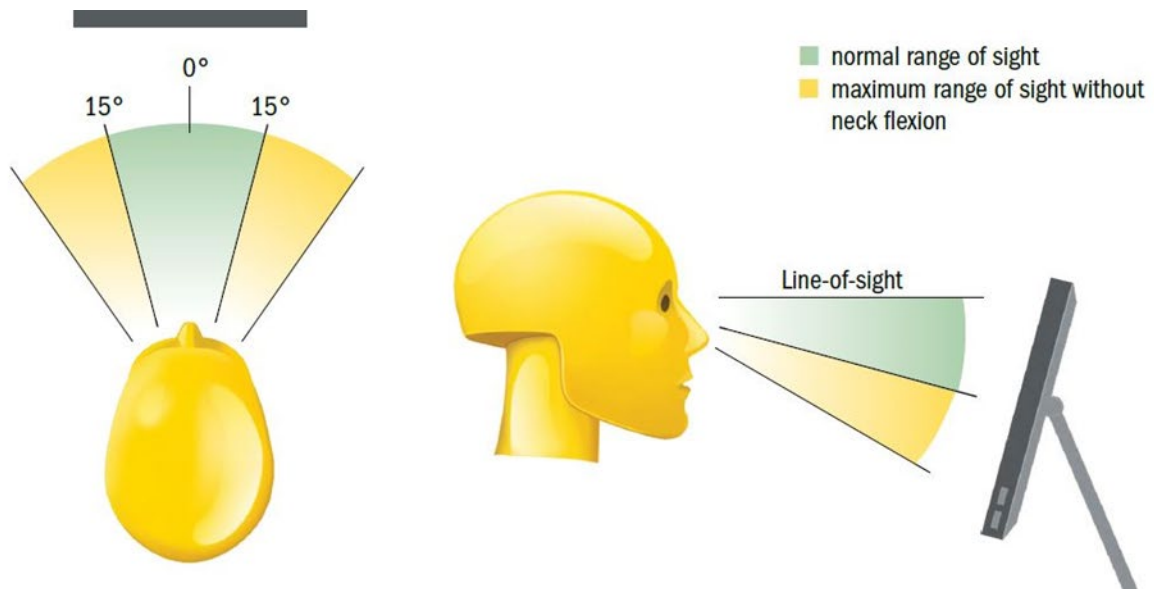


Fig 3: Viewing Angle

## 6.4. Keyboard and Mouse

- (a) The key board and mouse are one of the most used components of your employees workstation set up, however it is common to overlook these when purchasing equipment. Many times, the standard keyboard and mouse will be purchased, when there are many different alternatives that can help with your employee's comfort whilst working.

### 6.4.1. Keyboard

- (a) As technology has progressed, the availability of different types of keyboards has increased so it is vitally important to understand what your employees needs are to enable you to purchase the correct type of keyboard.
- (b) Factors that you should consider when purchasing keyboards include:
- The type of work your employees are undertaking: this will make a difference to the type of keyboard you order. These doing fast word processing are mainly suited to a standard keyboard layout, however you may have employees who work heavily with numbers or are involved in design which may require a different layout on the keyboard;
  - Wired or Wireless keyboards: both types have advantages and disadvantages so it is important to ensure that you consult with your employees to check which



is the best option. The wireless configuration removes the cable and makes the desk configuration easier but there are chances that the connectivity may not be as good as a wired option;

- (iii) Keystrokes: the actual design of the keyboard switches can have a huge impact on the user. The switches make all the difference in the sensitivity, level of noise, and comfort. In a large open plan office, traditional hard plastic keyboard switches can dramatically add to the overall noise in the workplace;
  - (iv) Ergonomic design: There are many different options available, some keyboards come with a built-in wrist support, whilst others have just a standard tilt and height adjustment.
- (c) Once you have purchased keyboards, it is important that your employees are aware of how to position it correctly for maximum comfort. The user's upper arms should be relaxed and by their side and the elbows bent at a right angle (90 degrees) with their wrists straight. This helps promote a neutral wrist position - refer to Fig 1 for the ideal posture when working at a workstation.
  - (d) The keyboard should not be placed in the middle of the screen, but rather align the screen with "G" and "H" keys on the keyboard. Also Keep 4 to 10cm distance between the edge of the table and the keyboard.
  - (e) The use of a keyboard tray on the desk will provide users will additional adjustability when setting up their keyboard.

#### 6.4.2. The Mouse

- (a) As with the keyboard, there are many different types of devices available and what you choose will depend mainly on user preferences and how much they use a mouse for daily work.
- (b) One of the most important factors when choosing a mouse for your employees is how it fits against the users hands. The mouse should fit comfortable in the palm of the hand without the need to squeeze the outer fingers to hold the mouse. Also the user should not need to extend the hand too far to use the buttons on the mouse.
- (c) Factors to consider include:
  - (i) Wired or Wireless: As with keyboards, both have advantages and disadvantages. A wireless mouse allows the user more flexibility and increases the options for placement of the mouse. It also removes the cord from the workstation, however there can be issues with connection;
  - (ii) Shape and size: The mouse should fit the user's hand and support the natural curve of the hand. The mouse should also allow users to maintain a neutral positioning of the hand and wrist; and
  - (iii) Buttons: The mouse buttons should be responsive to a light touch and should not require the user to reach or extend the finger too far to use them.
  - (iv) The mouse should be placement close to the keyboard and at same height level of the keyboard



- (d) It is important to consult with your employees when purchasing input devices such as keyboards and mice as individual needs will be one of the main factors that will influence the type of equipment that is purchased.

## 6.5. The Environment

- (a) Now that the users own workstation has been configured, consideration needs to be given to the environment they are working within. There are many issues that need to be reviewed to ensure maximum comfort for your employees. Issues that need to be considered include:
  - (i) Lighting
  - (ii) Glare
  - (iii) Task Lighting
  - (iv) Noise
  - (v) Space
  - (vi) Location of office facilities

### 6.5.1. Lighting

- (a) Lighting levels in an office environment are often overlooked, however this can be one of the biggest factors leading to injuries or ill health and also complaints from your employees.
- (b) Poor lighting can also affect the quality of work, specifically in situation where precision is required, and overall productivity.
- (c) When considering the lighting in your working environment, there are various issues that you should keep in mind. You need to find an appropriate level of brightness that will both reduce both eyestrain and muscle soreness that can develop from leaning forward or to the side when employees are using a monitor.
- (d) The recommended lighting levels in an office environment is between 30 to 50 foot candles or 300 to 500 lux, refer to *ADOSH-SF - CoP 8.0 - General Workplace Amenities* for further information.

### 6.5.2. Glare

- (a) Glare is an issue that can result in eye strain, visual fatigue or similar visual discomfort during the working day, however some simple control measures can easily reduce the effect of glare.
- (b) Windows and bright lights are often sources of glare. To check for glare, ask your employees to turn off their monitors and then look for any reflections on the monitor. If they are experiencing reflections on the monitor then try tilting or moving the monitor downward to reduce the reflection. It is also important not to move the monitor to a position that it becomes uncomfortable for the employee to use, refer to section 6.3 on setting up your monitor.
- (c) If moving the monitor does not sufficiently reduce the glare on a screen then you will need to look at other means of reducing this. If possible, try to relocate the workstation to a position where the glare on the screen is not an issue. Avoid

positioning workstations directly in front of windows or underneath overhead lights. Ideally, a workstation should be positioned at a 90° angle from a window. Also, consider installing blinds on windows to reduce the direct sunlight.

- (d) Anti glare screens can be fitted to monitors, however this should be one of the last controls that are considered as the screen need to be cleaned on a regular basis as they tend to become very dusty and can cause a further viewing obstruction.

### 6.5.3. Task Lighting

- (a) Depending on the tasks that your employees are undertaking, you may need to install direct task lighting for your staff. Task lighting is not about making the entire office brighter, it is providing direct lighting to those employees who are undertaking tasks that require a higher level of light to allow the person to complete the task.
- (b) As an employer, you should consult with your employees around the need for additional task lighting. A desk lamp will provide the extra lighting that an employee may need clearly see documents whilst avoiding excessive light near the monitor. If the employee is right handed then the task lighting should be placed on the left side as this will help avoid shadows and vice versa for left-handed employees.

### 6.5.4. Noise

- (a) Noise is one of the most common complaints raised by employees working in corporate office settings especially in open office concepts where employees are situated together in a large space with little or no separation. A noisy office environment can lead to a number of issues, including reduced productivity and increased stress levels within your employees.
- (b) Noise in the office is again an issue that is often overlooked however can be a big contributor to the comfort of your employees. How you design the overall layout of the office can help to reduce noise significantly.
- (c) As an employer, you have a duty to ensure that your employees are not exposed to noise levels that can cause damage to their hearing, this should be considered as part of your overall risk management program, refer to *ADOSH-SF - CoP 3.0 - Occupational Noise* for further details on how to undertake a noise risk assessment.
- (d) There are a number of simple ways that can help reduce the noise that your employees are exposed to. Printers and other office equipment should be positioned away from the general office area, ideally in a closed room, as this will help with absorbing the noise-emitted from the printer.
- (e) The provision of break out areas for employees to gather and take a break will also help reduce ambient noise in the general office. Employees should be encouraged to gather there rather than at their workstations as the noise from ongoing conversations can be irritating to others who are concentrating on a work task.
- (f) If space allows, consider introducing quiet rooms that employees can use if they need to work on specific tasks that require additional concentration.

- (g) When you are designing the workplace, look at the type of furniture you order. Acoustic furniture can help to reduce the noise within the office. Other simple issues such as the type of flooring that you choose for the office and also office equipment will help reduce any noise within the office environment.

#### 6.5.5. Space

- (a) Space for your employees when working is a very important issue. Not allowing enough space for employees to move freely around their own workstation or the office environment can lead to a number of issue including increased stress within your employees.
- (b) As an employer you must ensure that sufficient space is allowed for safe egress of the office environment during an emergency evacuation. This should be considered during the risk assessment that you have undertaken. Refer to *ADOSH-SF - Element 6 - Emergency Management* for further information on requirements.
- (c) A further consideration should also be providing sufficient space for employee's storage, insufficient space for stargaze often leads to employees storing goods under their desk which can then lead to incorrect set up of the workstation.

#### 6.5.6. Office Facilities

- (a) Office facilities such as printers, fax machines and employee storage should be a consideration when designing the layout of the office.
- (b) As highlighted above, the location of printers and other machines should be away from the main working area, this will not only help reduce noise, bit also will help encourage employees to take breaks from their workstation when they need to print documents.
- (c) Break out areas, where employees can take a break for a coffee or lunch are a great way to help improve the working environment. Employees should be encouraged to use these for breaks rather than take drinks at their desk. This not only helps improve employee interaction but also encourages breaks from the workstation.
- (d) Storage facilities are very important to ensuring a good ergonomic set up in the office. The lack of storage will encourage employees to store items on or under their desk, leading to poor ergonomic set up of the workstation.
- (e) Employees should be encouraged to work with a clear desk policy, this helps to recue unwanted clutter at their desk, but also helps promote a robust ergonomic workstation set up.

## 6.6. Working with Laptops and Tablets

- (a) The need for mobility within the working environment has increased, which has promoted the use of laptops and tablets on a daily basis. Convenience in taking work between the office, home, and a multitude of other locations has become a requirement for many employees.
- (b) The same guidelines apply when using a laptop or tablet and it is important that employees are educated around the correct use and set up when using these devices.
- (c) There are also a number of accessories that can be added to the workstation to help your employees when using a tablet or laptop.

### 6.6.1. Docking Station

- (a) If your employees are using Laptops or tablets on a regular basis in the same environment, then a docking station can be used to help with the workstation set up. A docking station can allow employees to add a keyboard, mouse and monitor, effectively turning it into a full desktop set up.

### 6.6.2. Laptop / Tablet Stand

- (a) A good way to help improve ergonomics if your employees are using Laptops and Tablets on a daily basis is to provide a Laptop / Tablet stand. Most laptop stands are quite versatile, dependent on the type you choose, employees should be able to transfer these to most locations they are working with their devices.

## 6.7. Breaks and Exercise.

- (a) An important part of ensuring the health and wellbeing of your employees when working in the office is encouraging them to take regular breaks from their workstations.
- (b) A good way to do this is the 20-20-20 rule. Every 20 minutes employees are working at their workstation they should take a 20-second break and focus on something 20 feet away. Twenty seconds is the time it will take the eye muscles to relax after a continued spell of looking at their computer monitors. This should be repeated every 20 minutes. There are many apps or extensions that can be added to the computer to remind them to take a break every 20 minutes.
- (c) It is also good to encourage employees to do some level of exercise or stretching during the day to relieve any stiffness that they may feel when working at their desks. A list of suggested stretches are provided below as Fig 4.

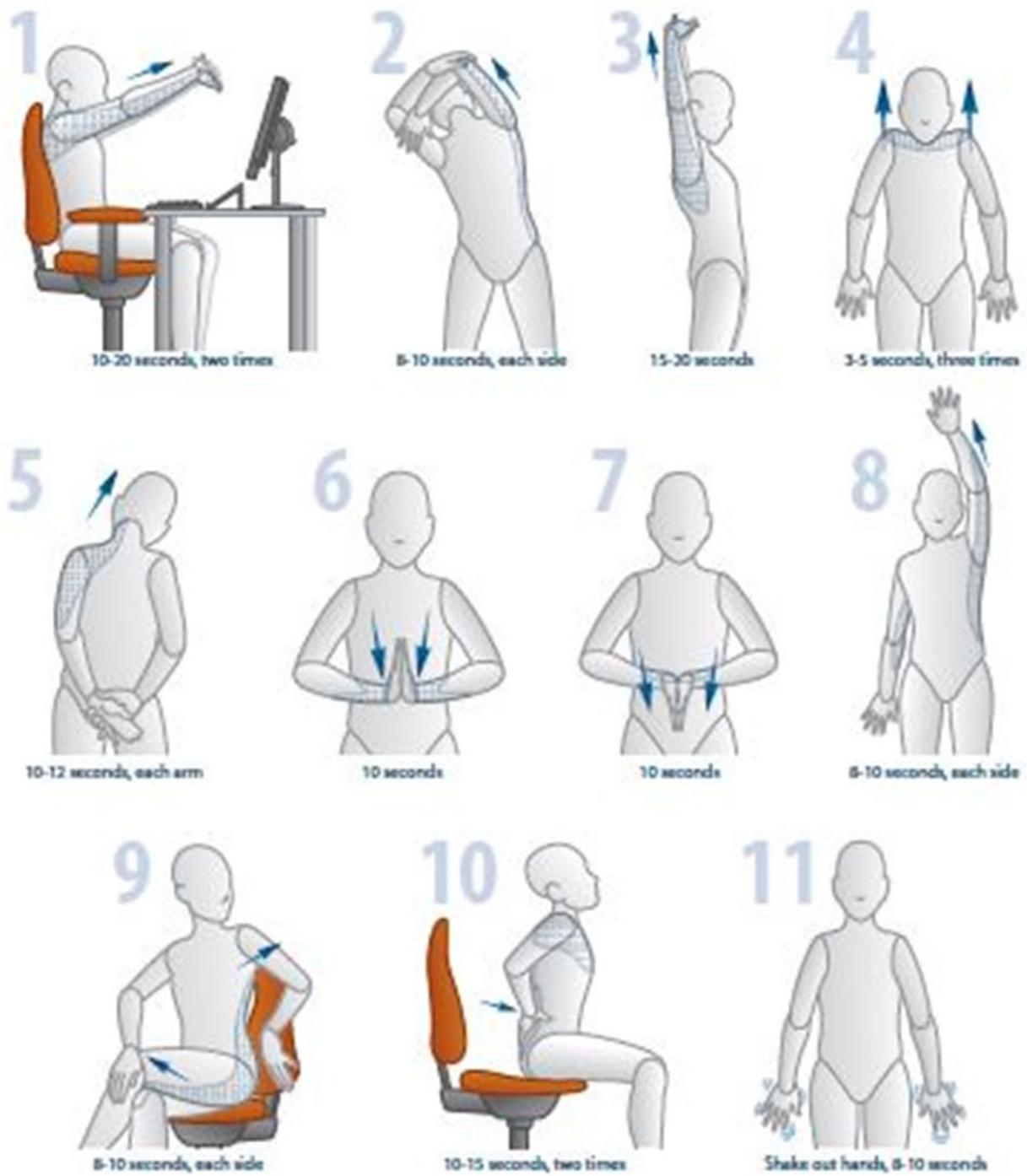


Fig 4: Desk Stretches

## 7. References

- *HSG38 - Lighting at Work - ISBN 978 0 7176 1232 1*
- *HSG57 - Seating at Work - ISBN 978 0 7176 1231 4*
- *Office Ergonomics Resource Guide - Workers Compensation Board of Nova Scotia*
- *Office Ergonomics - Guidelines for preventing Musculoskeletal Injuries - Worksafe Travail Securitaire*
- *Officewise - A guide to Health and Safety in the office - WorkSafe Victoria*

## 8. Document Amendment Record

Version	Revision Date	Description of Amendment	Page/s Affected
4.0	15 <sup>th</sup> July 2024	New Document	N/A

## Appendix 1: Examples of Training Methods

The below table is an example of a self-assessment that your employees can undertake to check the setup of their workstation and identify any issues that they may have.

It is important to ensure that employees have received training on how to set up a workstation prior to undertaking this self-assessment.

The results of all assessments undertaken should be reviewed by a competent person and where your employees have identified any issues, these should be reviewed directly with the user. Any additional assessment undertaken should be documented.

As with all assessments, these should be reviewed on a regular basis, at least annually or when there are any significant changes in the workplace or the software that your employees are using.



Issue	Yes	No	N/A	Suggested actions	Comments
<b>The Chair</b>					
Have you received training / information on how to correctly adjust your chair?				Speak to your line manager to arrange training.	
Does the chair have the ability to be adjusted (seat pan, back support)?				Obtain a properly functioning chair	
Are your feet fully supported by the floor when you are seated?				Lower the chair Add footrest Readjust for footwear height	
Are you able to sit without feeling pressure from the chair seat on the back of your knees?				Adjust seat pan Add a back support	
Does your chair provide support for your lower back?				Adjust chair back Obtain proper chair Obtain lumbar roll	
Does your chair have a 5-pronged base?				Obtain a properly functioning chair	
Do your armrests allow you to get close to your workstation?				Adjust armrests Remove armrests (this may lead to other issues)	
<b>The Work Surface</b>					
Is the working level at your elbow height (keying, mousing, writing, etc.)?				Adjust chair or desk height.	
Are commonly used items located within arm's reach?				Rearrange workstation Remove clutter or unnecessary objects from primary and secondary reach area	
Is there room for your legs underneath your workstation?				Adjust chair or desk height Remove clutter or unnecessary objects	

Issue	Yes	No	N/A	Suggested actions	Comments
<b>Monitor</b>					
Is your monitor positioned in front of you?				Reposition monitor	
Is the monitor approx. an arm's length away from you?				Reposition monitor; if space is limited a wider desk may be required	
Is the top of your monitor casing located below your eye level?				Adjust monitor height (may require a monitor stand)	
<b>KeyBoard and Mouse</b>					
Are your keyboard and mouse located at the same working level?				Raise or lower your workstation Raise or lower keyboard Raise or lower chair	
Are you able to keep your wrists neutral while keying or mousing?				Adjust chair Check posture Check keyboard and mouse height	
Does your mouse feel comfortable in your hand?				Evaluate size and shape of mouse Move mouse closer to keyboard Obtain a larger keyboard tray if necessary	
<b>The Environment</b>					
Is your work surface and monitor free from glare and reflections?				If possible, adjust light source or adjust work surface configuration Place your monitor perpendicular to glare source	
Is lighting sufficient for reading and writing tasks?				Discuss with your line manager regarding task lighting	
Are you using a headset or speakerphone if you are writing or keying while talking on the phone?				Discuss with your line manager regarding using a headset	

Issue	Yes	No	N/A	Suggested actions	Comments
Do you have a document holder? If yes, is it placed directly in front of you?				If necessary, obtain one and position it directly in front of you	
Are the noise levels in your workspace too high?				Speak to your line manager regarding the noise levels and noise risk assessment	
Do you have sufficient room to store documents or other items required for your role?				Speak with your line manager regarding the provision of additional storage space.	
<b>Breaks</b>					
Are you taking regular breaks away from your workstation?				Take regular breaks at least every hour	
Are you taking a break from looking at your monitor every 20 minutes?				Use the 20-20-20 rule every 20 minutes	
Are you doing regular stretches at your desk?				Undertake stretches at your desk when feely stiff or tired.	
<b>Traning and Procedures</b>					
Have you received training on the correct way to set up your workstation				Speak to your line manager to arrange training	
Are you aware of how to report any issues you have with your workstation?				Speak with your line manager	
Are you able to easily use the software provided to undertake your role?				Speak with your line manager	
Additional Comments:					

## Appendix 2 - Body Discomfort Survey

Body Part	Yes	No	Tasks that normally cause discomfort
Hand/wrist			
Elbow			
Shoulder			
Neck			
Back			
Legs			
Headache/eyestrain			
Other			
Comments:			





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