

## Seven Tips to Save Your Neck & Back While Working At a Desk

A poorly designed workstation puts extra stress on your body causing unnecessary pain and tension. There are many things you can do when setting up your workstation to minimize and prevent these problems. Follow these 7 tips and feel better today.

Computer monitor height and location is one of the most important aspects in your workstation. The monitor should be at eye level and directly in front of you, not off to one side. A common problem is having the monitor too low which forces the head forward on top of the shoulders, putting significant stress on the neck and upper back. For each inch the head moves forward on the shoulders the work required to hold this position is increased by a factor of 10. Help yourself out and raise the monitor, you will notice the difference.

Remember the 90 degree rule when setting up your workstation. Your knees should be bent at 90 degrees with your feet flat on the floor. If your chair is too high, lower it. If lowering your chair makes the desk you are at too high, use a footstool under your feet.

Your elbows should hang naturally at your sides, bent between 80 and 120 degrees. Try to keep your wrists in a neutral position when working. Frequently working with your wrists bent can cause irritation and contribute to overuse conditions such as carpal tunnel.

Proper low back support is also important. When you slump in your chair you lose the natural, protective lumbar curve in your spine. Always sit up straight with your rear end as far back as possible in the corner of the chair between the cushion and the chair-back. If your chair doesn't have a lumbar support use an ergonomic back cushion, a small pillow or rolled up towel placed behind your back. All these help reinforce the normal lumbar curve and will protect your back.

Keep your workstation balanced. Avoid frequent, repetitive turning to only one side of your desk. Repetitive twisting can cause muscle imbalance and ultimately lead to injury and joint damage. Move frequently used items to both sides of your desk to balance your movement throughout the day.

Avoid eyestrain. Daily eyestrain can contribute to tension headaches. Make sure you have plenty of light when you are working and reading. Adjust your monitor or lighting so there isn't any glare on your monitor.

Take frequent micro-breaks. If you aren't able to get up and move very often, try to take a second or two just to stretch your arms and neck. Frequently people working at a desk will keep their arms and shoulders rolled forward for prolonged periods. If you sit this way, take a second and pull your arms and shoulders back and take a couple of deep breaths. This will help keep your muscles relaxed and limber and relieve some tension accumulating in the neck and shoulders. Take a second to stretch your hands also, open them as wide as you can and hold the stretch.

Chiropractic adjustments decrease pain and improve balance and function in the body. For more information visit our website at [www.ervinchiropractic.com](http://www.ervinchiropractic.com) or call us at 222-4442.