



Physiotherapists:
The Body Specialists

Physio Tips

COMPUTER HABITS

Physiotherapy Association of BC

HEALTHY COMPUTER HABITS

Physiotherapists are seeing an increase in electronic injuries, and the aches and pains that come from sitting at a computer for long periods of time.

Physiotherapists offer these guidelines for computer:

- **Stretch** – Include regular stretching into your work routine. Every 20 to 60 minutes, do three or four stretches – for hands, shoulders, neck and trunk.
- **Move** – Get up from your workstation for a short stretch or walk around to promote blood flow to fatigued muscles every hour.
- **Reduce strain** – Make sure you are sitting correctly with your back supported:
 1. Adjust your chair as described below, as below, to support our back and minimize awkward postures that can lead to muscle tension, fatigue and soreness. Avoid slouching. Ensure the small of your back is supported.
 2. Sit with your buttocks right back in the chair and your feet flat on the floor, or on a footrest or phone book. Your knees should be bent at a 90-degree angle, at the same level or slightly above your hips. Keep your shoulders relaxed; arms close to your body or resting comfortably on the armrests, which should be positioned close to your sides; elbows bent at approximately 90 degrees; forearms parallel to the floor; and wrists straight, which may involve adjusting the angle of the keyboard or mouse;
 3. Keep your eyes level within range of the top third of the screen. Don't squint to see the screen (check for glare or enlarge the font);
 4. Keep your work, keyboard and mouse centered in front of the monitor and close to you, to avoid arching your neck or twisting your body;

5. Use a good quality mouse that requires minimal pressure to click, and be sure to position it on the same level and as close to the keyboard as possible. Keep your wrist straight and move the mouse with whole arm movements not just the wrist;
6. Use ergonomic computer accessories, such as document holders to encourage neutral neck postures, and head sets to avoid awkward neck postures (often seen as holding the phone in the crook of the neck) while interfacing with the computer and telephone;
7. A wrist pad on the keyboard allows you to rest your wrists on the pad and reduces stress on the wrist; and
8. If you're working on a computer all day at work. Choose activities for leisure and recreation that will not continue to stress the same muscles / tendons.

Talk to a physiotherapist if you are experiencing regular or increasing discomfort while sitting at your computer, take early corrective action.

Physiotherapists are experts in movement and mobility, body mechanics, muscles and joints. They will help develop an exercise program specially-tailored to your needs, putting together the right combination of activities to improve physical fitness and avoid injury.

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