

## Ergonomics – *For The Home Office*

Many home offices are makeshift setups that are, in general, less than ergonomically designed and have the potential for creating cumulative trauma disorders. Frequent use of un-ergonomically designed equipment, or improper use of good equipment, can produce disorders of the hand, back pain, spine and neck problems, aching shoulders, sore elbows, eyestrain, and other problems.

Basically, anybody spending long hours at the home computer should follow the same rules advised for office workers: get the right equipment and use it properly. The following offers some general guidelines for outfitting a home office.

### Chair

- The most important issue for a home office is to use a good ergonomically designed chair.
- The chair should have a five-legged base and casters that roll easily.
- It should be adjustable for height to ensure that one's line of vision is about even with the top of the computer-monitor screen.
- Armrests should be adjustable, to keep the forearms horizontal while using the keyboard and the elbows close to the torso.

### Desk

- A height-adjustable desk is desirable. If this is not available, then using an adjustable chair and fitting other computer-related equipment to the desk becomes imperative.
- Curved desks should be avoided since they require more reaching and limit the ability to swivel the chair.

### Monitor

- The monitor should be positioned at arm's length, tilted toward the user.
- The top of the monitor should be positioned even with the line of vision and placed at a right angle to nearest window. The center of the monitor will likely be at the level of your nose.
- An antiglare screen filter should be used.
- To reduce eye- and body-strain, the user need to look away from the screen, blink, and change body positions on a regular basis.

### Keyboard

- The keyboard should be placed at a height and distance that keeps the elbows comfortable.
- The keyboard should be flat, or tilted slightly downward away from the body, to help keep the lower arms, wrists, and hands in a straight line.
- The hands should be essentially flat, with no twisting of wrists to the side, or upward or downward.
- Keyboards split down the middle, with each half rotated outward at the "ZXCVB" base of the keyboard may work well for broad-shouldered users, but poorly for smaller or hunt-and-peck type typists.

### Mouse

- The mouse should be large enough so that the hand fits comfortably over it.
- The mouse should be let go when it is not being used.
- Hand strain can be reduced by occasionally using function keys, instead of the mouse.