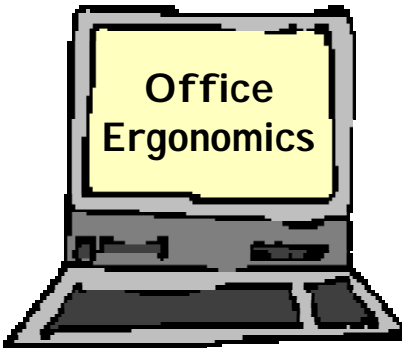


# Environmental Health & Safety

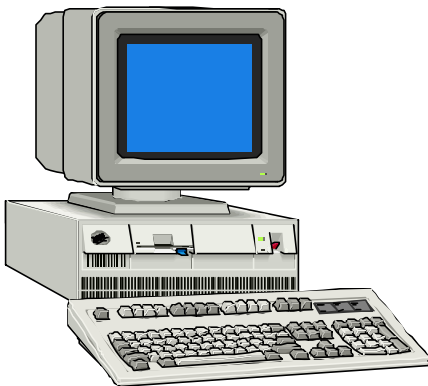
Department of Public Safety  
A department of Administrative Services



Annex 5

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Ogden, UT 84408-3002  
Telephone (801)626-7547  
Fax 801.626.6319  
<http://www.safe.weber.edu>

You spend 1/3 of  
your day at work.  
Make it a  
comfortable day!



## DOES THIS SOUND LIKE YOU?



More and more people are spending much of their day sitting at a computer. Generally, people who work more than four hours per day at a computer have a higher risk of upper extremity stress injuries. That is why it is important to use proper ergonomics and arrange your work area so that aches, tension, fatigue and other stresses on your body are minimized.

## WHAT IS ERGONOMICS?

**E**rgonomics is the science of fitting your work area to your body, *not* adjusting your body so you fit your work area.

## YOUR KEYBOARD

- ~ Keep your forearms, wrists and hands in a straight line while using a keyboard. Use a padded wrist rest to help maintain a neutral position.
- ~ Use minimum force to strike the keys.
- ~ Position your keyboard at your elbow height when you are seated.
- ~ Place your mouse or trackball next to the keyboard so you don't stretch to use it.
- ~ Avoid resting your elbows, forearms or wrists on a hard surface or a sharp edges while writing or typing.

## Your Monitor

**M**onitors should be adjusted to provide the most comfortable viewing position.

- ~ Position the top of the screen at or just below your eye level.

- ~ Adjust the contrast and brightness.
- ~ Use window shades or anti-glare filters on your screen to reduce glare.
- ~ Give your eyes frequent breaks by closing the momentarily, gazing at a distant object and blinking often.

## YOUR SITTING POSTURE



- ~ Looking forward, your head should be over your shoulders and your shoulders should be relaxed and comfortable.
- ~ Using the keyboard, your forearms should be parallel with the floor with wrists straight.
- ~ Thighs should be parallel with the floor, knees even or slightly higher than hips.
- ~ Lower back should be supported and you should sit straight in the chair to maintain the back's natural curve. Don't slouch!
- ~ Use document holders to avoid repeatedly twisting your neck.
- ~ Avoid over use by alternating between work activities which use different muscle groups.
- ~ Take frequent mini-breaks throughout the day to give your muscles and joints a chance to rest.

## YOUR CHAIR

Your chair is the most important part of a good workstation. Adjust your chair so it will help support good posture. Here are some general guidelines:



- ~ Adjust the height so your forearms and thighs are parallel to the floor.
- ~ The height should allow you to place your feet flat on the floor. If this is not feasible, use a manufactured foot rest or other items, such as a telephone book or binder.
- ~ Adjust your backrest so it supports your lower back. If your chair doesn't adjust, try using a rolled up towel or small pillow for support.
- ~ Adjust arm rests so they are elbow height.

## LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

To create a workstation that fits you, try some of the suggestions in this brochure.

But proceed with caution because what is right for someone else may not be right for you. Listen to your body. If it tells you your discomfort has gone away, you are probably on the right track.

## YOUR WORK AREA

- ~ Place frequently used items within easy reach (*telephone, mouse, reference materials, etc.*)
- ~ Avoid awkward reaching or twisting to access filing cabinets, drawers, books on shelves.
- ~ Maintain appropriate light levels for specific tasks, such as more illumination for reading a document than viewing a computer screen.
- ~ Keep your neck straight for extended use of the telephone. Use a shoulder rest, speaker telephone or headset.

## STRETCH BREAKS

Stretch breaks will help reduce muscle tension caused from static overload. When muscles remain static they will fatigue more easily, circulation will decrease, you will become uncomfortable and your task will become more difficult. Stretching can also help relieve discomfort due to repetitive movements and awkward posture.

Proper exercises complement a complete office ergonomics program. Certain activities can strengthen your muscles and help your body. Choose activities outside of work that will not aggravate existing ergonomic problems.

**Contact EH&S  
Occupational Health  
Specialist  
at 626-7823 with  
questions about  
ergonomics and your  
workstation.**