

# THE “HIPP” APPROACH TO ERGONOMICS

Ergonomics is a way of organizing your work area that allows you to be comfortable and efficient in performing activities. General recommendations offer ranges of appropriate set ups that can help reduce the strain and overuse of muscles, nerves, fascia, and joints. However, people may require variations of arrangements depending on body size, fitness level, work activities, and any existing physical problems.

The “HIPP” Approach allows each person to adjust the workstation for his or her own needs. The idea is to address the **H**eight of work equipment, **I**mmEDIATE reach zone/distance for items used frequently, **P**osture of the person working, and the **P**ace at which activities are performed. The goal is to help each person adjust his/her own work area to allow for efficient work with the least strain to the body.

## HEIGHT

*Appropriate height of a chair and equipment help with efficiency and comfort at work and home.*

### 1. Chair

- Hips and knees should be  $\sim 90^\circ$ - $110^\circ$  with feet on the floor or footrest.
- Arms should rest comfortably at the level of the desk, arm rest or keyboard drawer without shrugging shoulder!
- Back rest should give support to the lower and upper back.

### 2. Desk/work surface

- Arms should be near your side. Reduce reaching higher than shoulder height to work.

### 3. Monitor

- Eyes should rest in the top 1 inch of the monitor screen to reduce neck strain.
- If wearing bifocals, the monitor may need to be placed lower to avoid extending the neck.

### 4. Document holder

- Place at the same height and next to the monitor. It can also be placed directly in front of and just below the monitor screen.

### 5. Keyboard

- Arms should rest comfortably at your sides. Elbows should be bent at an angle of  $\sim 90^\circ$ - $120^\circ$ .
- Hands float above the wrist rest.

## IMMEDIATE REACH ZONE/DISTANCE

*Immediate reach zone is the distance one can comfortably reach without straining. It is typically an arm's distance in an arc around a person.*

- Items to be maintained within the immediate reach zone include the phone, mouse, pens/pencils, staplers, 10-keys, files, reference books and other items that are used frequently throughout each day. The mouse may be switched from one side to the other to reduce hand and finger strain.
- It is helpful to stand up and walk to equipment such as the printer, files, or reference books that are not within your immediate reach, rather than wheeling around in the chair.
- Monitor should be approximately 18-22 inches (arm's length) from the user.

## POSTURE

*Posture is important to reduce the stress to joints, nerves, and arteries. Proper posture also places muscles and nerves in an optimum position for efficient use.*

### 1. Spine

- a. Lower back, upper back, and neck should be in a “neutral” position.
- b. Avoid slouching and forward head postures.

### 2. Shoulders

- a. Work with arms below shoulder level for most tasks.

### 3. Wrist

- a. Minimize bending wrists up, down, and to each side while typing, writing, filing, etc.

### 4. Mini breaks

- a. Short breaks to move and stretch help to realign posture and reduce strain to muscles, nerves, and joints.
- b. Rest eyes by closing them for a minute.  
Look far away (outside if possible).
- c. Alternate positions during the day from sitting to standing, and walking.

## PACE

*These tips help you rejuvenate and tend to increase work efficiency.*

1. Moderate your pace while working. Moderating your pace allows muscles, nerves, and the brain to function throughout the day with less strain. Intersperse mini breaks and slower paced activities with faster paced activities and stressful deadlines.
2. Perform mini breaks to stretch muscles and improve blood flow. Mini breaks reduce strain on eyes, soft tissues and joints.
3. Take a lunch break *away from your desk* each day. Walk outside when possible. Close your eyes to rest them and look far into the distance occasionally.

## WHAT CAN I DO FOR MYSELF?

1. Use the “HIPPA” Approach at work and home for ergonomic changes to increase efficiency and reduce stress to your body.
2. Take walks, go biking or swimming for whole body exercise.
3. Keep your trunk and upper body strong and flexible with exercises.
4. Use ice and/or heat on sore areas.
5. Reduce stress!
6. Keep a positive attitude! 😊