

# Neck & Back Pain

For information on all types of injuries visit:  
<http://www.cssphysio.com.au/forpatients.html>



## Computer Workplace Set-up

If you work at a computer for more than one or two hours per day, you have the potential for developing back, neck or other overuse injuries. It is important that your work station is set-up correctly. In most cases it is advisable to have a qualified OH&S officer, ergonomic specialist, or experienced physiotherapist give you advice on setting up your computer work-station. It may even be necessary for them to visit your work site and assess your set-up. This can be difficult to do yourself. For example, look at the many things that need to be considered in the following checklist.



officer, ergonomic specialist, or experienced physiotherapist give you advice on setting up your computer work-station. It may even be necessary for them to visit your work site and assess your set-up. This can be difficult to do yourself. For example, look at the many things that need to be considered in the following checklist.

### Computer Workstation Checklist:

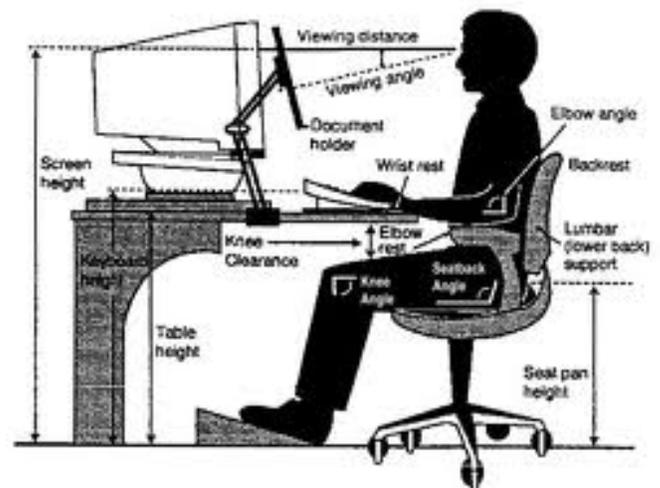
#### Chair:

1. Height: Your feet should be comfortably on the floor or on a footrest. Your knees should be no higher, and preferably slightly lower than your hips. Legs should fit comfortably under the desk.
2. Seat - length: The backs of your knees should not rest against the front of the seat.
  - tilt: the seat should be flat or tilted slightly downward at the front.
3. Back-rest
  - incline: between vertical and a small backwards incline.
  - support: firm support, preferably most prominent just above the 'belt-line'
4. Armrests
  - height: sitting tall, elbows

bent, armrest should be at forearm level or just below. They should not interfere with the chair sliding under the desk. Armrests are not necessary in an office chair.

#### Desk:

1. Height: with the forearms parallel to the ground, the top of the desk should be just above wrist level.
2. Leg room / (footstool): plenty of clearance for legs.
- 3 Layout: what you work on should be directly in front of you. If you need to turn, for instance at an 'L-shaped' desk, turn your chair with you.



Workstation: see diagram

1. Keyboard:
  - Position: comfortable relative to wrists. Upper arms comfortably by side.

- Wrist alignment: slightly extended.  
- Hand use / relaxation: regular breaks from keying.

2. Mouse: - Position: comfortable reach, elbow bent. Comfortable grip.

- hand use / relaxation: regular breaks. Care with repetitive use of one part of the hand.

3. Screen: - Height: top of screen at eye-level

- Distance: depending on screen and set-up, approximate distance of 45 to 75cm.

- Tilt: clear visualization.

- Size / visual / brightness - contrast

4. Phone:- Position.

- Use frequency & technique: a headset is often advisable.

5. Document Holder: next to screen

6. Other devices used: not to interfere with efficient posture.

**Lighting:** Lighting can affect your vision and how you use your computer. It can be affected by:

1. Position - Natural  
- Artificial  
-Glare  
-Contrasts

2. Office -Layout  
-Colours etc  
- Blinds etc

### General Points:

You should sit facing your computer directly, and avoid turning your head or body to one side. Some examples of how not to sit are shown below:



Children are vulnerable to developing neck and back pain from incorrect or excessive computer use. It is also more likely that their body position will be poor. They should take regular



breaks and may also benefit from using different positions, such as the one shown in the picture (left).

**Laptops:** There is great potential for problems when using a laptop, particularly if you do so regularly. In this case you should try to set it up like a PC, possibly with a separate keyboard & mouse. Using it on your lap is asking for trouble.



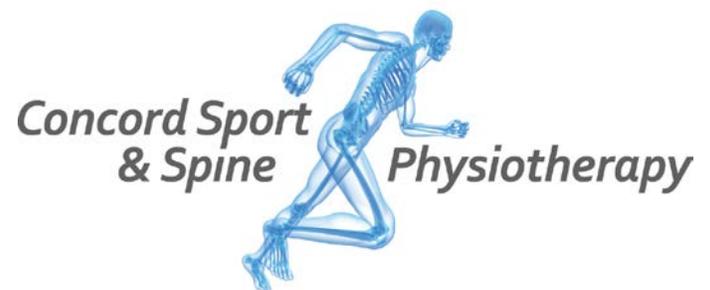
Because the laptop is very portable, here's a good tip. Spend 30 minutes at a time using it as a 'bench-top'. Place it on a high bench & stand to use it.

Get up regularly, and do a few quick stretching exercises as well.



For information on all types of injuries visit:

<http://www.cssphysio.com.au/forpatients.html>



Concord Sport & Spine Physiotherapy  
202 Concord Road  
Concord West, NSW 2138  
Sydney, Australia.  
Ph (02) 97361092

© Paul Monaro, CSSPhysio.