

April 2011 Monthly Safety Spotlight:

Office Safety: Ergonomics and Injury Prevention

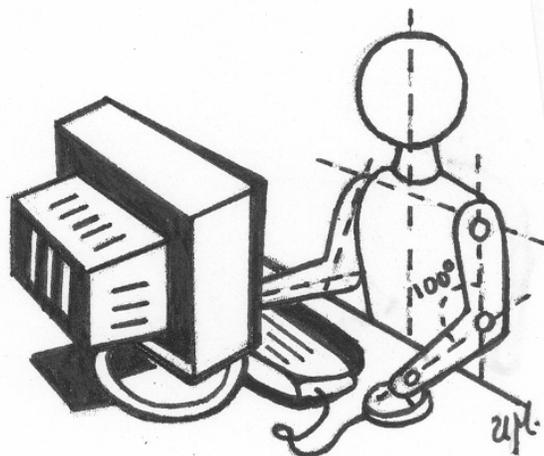
- Safety Discussion Topics Handouts
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 - Checklist for Creating a User-Friendly Work Station
 - Lifting Safety Checklist
 - Maintaining a Healthy Back – Easy as 1-2-3
 - Simple Stretches for a Healthy Back
 - Body Positioning
 - Professional Athlete at Work
 - Don't Let Weather Conditions Trip You Up
 - Watch Your Step on Steps and Stairs
 - Your Careful Behavior Prevents Falls

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Work Station Ergonomic Tips

Follow these simple steps to adjust your work station for maximum health and comfort

1. Set the height of your chair so your feet are flat on the floor or on a footrest, with your thighs parallel to the floor.
2. The chair backrest should provide firm lower back support with the curve in your back aligned with the chair.
3. Align the chair, keyboard and monitor.
4. Adjust the height of your keyboard so that it is at or near elbow level.
5. The keyboard height should promote relaxed arms with forearms parallel to the floor.
6. Position your mouse next to your keyboard and on the same level as your keyboard.
7. The wrists should be straight (neutral position, not angling up or down from your forearm).
8. Position the monitor 18 to 20 inches away (approximately arm's length) from you when you are using your keyboard.
9. Position the monitor so the top of the monitor is slightly below eye level, so you can view it with a slight downward gaze.
10. If you wear bifocals, the monitor height should be slightly lower to allow viewing without moving your head up and down.
11. Position the monitor at a right angle to windows or strong light sources to reduce glare.
12. If you refer to documents while keying, use a document holder, either an inline or vertical type document holder that is adjustable to the monitor screen.
13. Put frequently used items such as your phone, reference books etc., within easy reach.
14. Avoid resting your arms and elbows on the edge of sharp work surfaces.
15. Remove items stored under your workstation to provide adequate leg and knee clearance.

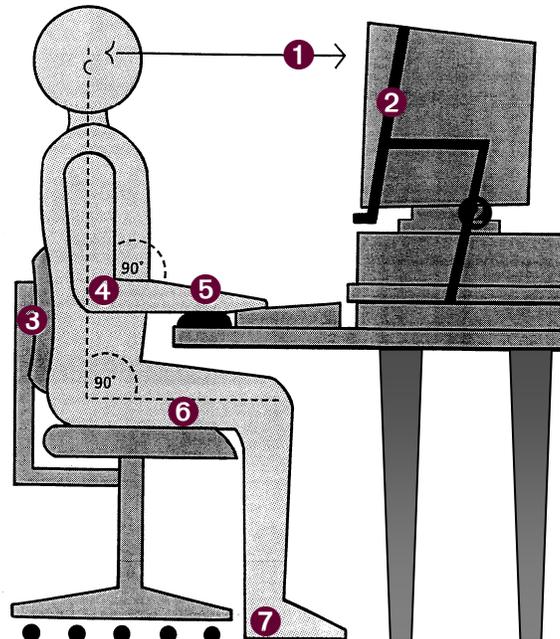


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Work Station Ergonomic Tips

Use this checklist to create a user-friendly work station



Prepared by the Campus Occupational Health Program 1992

- 1
 - Top of screen at eye level, lower for bifocal wearers
 - Screen distance at arm's length (18-20")
- 2
 - Document holder adjustable to screen height
- 3
 - Chair backrest provides firm lower back support
 - Chair back and seat easily adjustable for height and tilt by user
- 4
 - Keyboard height promotes relaxed arms with forearms parallel to the floor
- 5
 - Wrists straight (neutral)
 - added, movable wrist rest if needed, at same height as keyboard home row
- 6
 - Thighs parallel to the floor
 - Ample legroom under work surface
- 7
 - Feet rest firmly on floor or foot rest

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Lifting Safety Checklist: Follow These Steps for a Safe Lift



Assess the situation - Before lifting and carrying a heavy object, take a few moments to assess the situation. Consider these variables:

- How far will you have to carry the load?
- Is the way clear of clutter, cords, slippery areas, overhangs, stairs, curbs, uneven surfaces?
- Will there be doors that are closed?
- Did you ask someone to hold a door open or did you place a wedge under the door to hold it open?
- Did you test the weight of the object by lifting a corner? If it is too heavy or odd-shaped, did you STOP and get some help?
- If you're thinking of lifting something that is too heavy, what do you really have to gain?



Before Moving the Load:

- Can you use a hand or platform truck to move the load?
- Did you remember that it's easier to push than to pull?
- Did you consider using gloves to improve your grip and protect your hands?
- Once you get the load up, will you be able to see over the load or will the load block your view?
- Can the load be disassembled, carried in pieces and then reassembled?



While Moving the Load:

- Did you hold the load close to your body, try not to lean over, and keep your back straight or slightly arched?
- Did you use both hands to control the handtruck or pushcart?
- If an object is too heavy to lift or carry with a handtruck or load onto a pushcart, did you use a forklift (with a trained operator)?
- Did you use tie-down straps if needed, to secure the load?
- To avoid stairs and inclines, did you use a freight elevator?

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Maintaining a Healthy Back is as Easy as 1-2-3

1.

POSTURE

- Standing: Don't slouch, use a footrest or rubber mat if standing for a long time. Select appropriate and comfortable footwear.
- Sitting: Don't slouch, use lower back support, place feet flat on the ground.
- Lying down: Select a mattress that doesn't sag.



2.

EXERCISE

- Go for a walk, bike ride, aerobic dancing, swim, jog or another activity. ALWAYS maintain good posture throughout your exercise session.
- NOTE: if you have a history of back trouble, check with your doctor before you begin any strenuous exercise.

3.

HEALTHY EATING

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Being overweight puts extra strain on your back and knees.
- Enjoy fresh, nutritious foods that will provide energy and help you keep your weight down.
- Sign up for a weight reduction program if you need some extra support.



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Simple Stretches for a Healthy Back

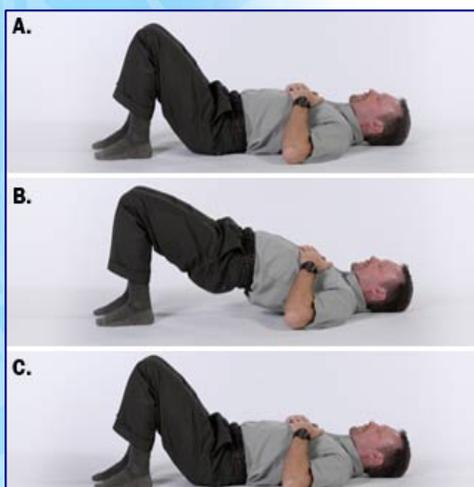
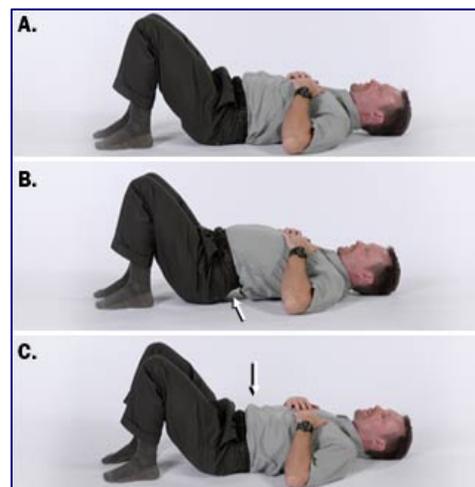
Have 15 minutes a day to prevent back pain? Try a few basic exercises to stretch and strengthen your back and supporting muscles. Repeat each exercise three or four times, then increase the number of repetitions as the exercise gets easier. If you've hurt your back in the past or have other health problems, such as osteoporosis, consult your doctor before doing these stretches

1. Lower Back Flexibility Exercise

A. Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Arch your back so that your pubic bone (pelvis?) feels like it's pointing towards your feet.

B: Hold for five seconds, then relax. Flatten your back, pulling your navel toward the floor so that your pelvis feels like it's pointing towards your head. Hold for five seconds, then relax.

C: Repeat.



2. Bridge Exercise

A. Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Keeping your shoulders and head relaxed on the floor, tighten your abdominal and gluteal muscles, then raise your hips to form a straight line from your knees to your shoulders.

B. Try to hold the position long enough to complete three deep breaths. Return to the starting position.

C. Repeat.

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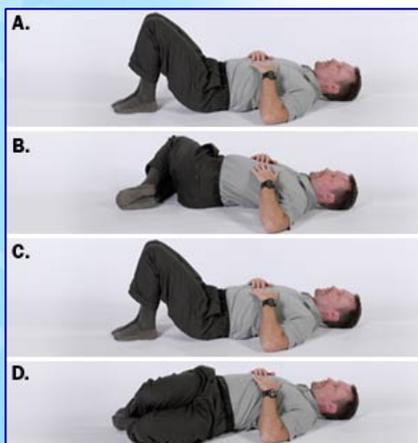
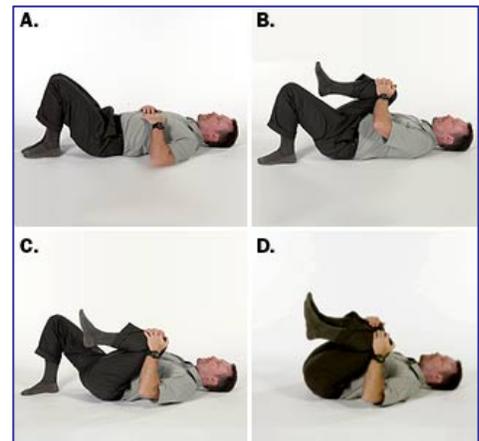
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3. Knee-to-Chest Stretch Exercise

A. Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Using both hands, pull up one knee and press it to your chest. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds.

B: Return to the starting position and repeat with the opposite leg. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds.

C: Return to the starting position and repeat with both legs at the same time.



4. Lower Back Rotational Stretch Exercise

A. Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Keeping your shoulders firmly on the floor, roll your bent knees to one side. Hold for 5 to 10 seconds.

B. Return to the starting position and repeat on the opposite side.

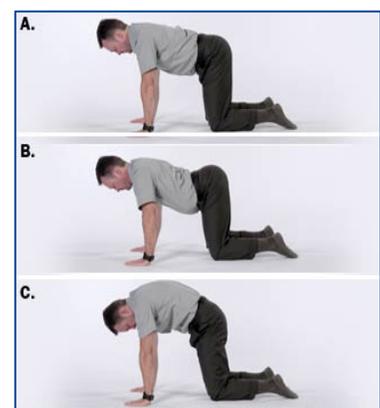
5. Cat Stretch Exercise

A. Position yourself on your hands and knees. Slowly let your back and abdomen sag towards the floor.

B. Slowly arch your back, as if you're pulling your abdomen up towards the ceiling.

C. Return to the starting position.

D. Repeat.

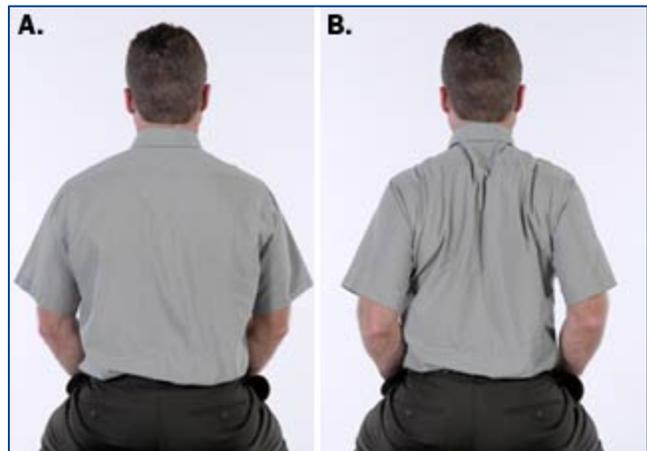


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6. Shoulder Blade Squeeze Exercise

- A. Sit on an armless chair or stool.
- B: Keeping your chin tucked in and your chest high, pull you shoulder blades together. Hold for five seconds, then relax.
- C: Repeat.



7. Seated Lower Back Rotational Stretch Exercise

- A. Sit on an armless chair or stool.
- B. Cross your right leg over your left leg. Bracing your left elbow against the outside of your right knee, twist and stretch to the side.
- C. Repeat, crossing your left leg over your right leg.

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Body Positioning: Flexibility/Stretching Exercises



Neck Stretch

- Tilt ear toward shoulder.
- Reach up and touch top of head with palm to hold in tilted position.
- Hold 5-10 seconds. Repeat 2-3 times (come out of very slowly)
- Reverse sides.

Pec Corner Stretch

- Stand at a corner about a foot away from the wall with forearms on opposite sides of the corner. One foot should be forward.
- Elbows should be at slightly below shoulder height.
- Keep abdominals tight to avoid arching back.
- Lean gently in towards the corner by bending the front knee until a stretch is felt in front of the chest.
- Hold 5-10 seconds. Repeat 2-3 times.

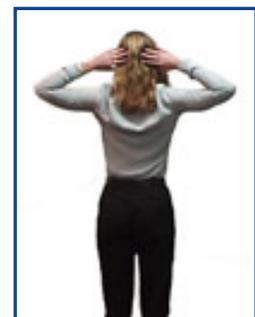


Overhead Reach

- Take a deep breath and reach up over head with both arms.
- Hold 5-10 seconds.
- Exhale and lower arms slowly.

Shoulder Pinch

- Place arms behind head being careful not to press.
- Relax shoulders and squeeze shoulder blades together, while keeping shoulders back and down.
- Hold 5-10 seconds. Repeat 2-3 times.



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Body Positioning: Flexibility/Stretching Exercises



Chair Rotation Stretch

- Sit in chair, and if you can, wrap feet around chair legs.
- Reach across body and grab back of chair.
- Pull gently to increase stretch in mid back.
- Hold 5-10 seconds. Repeat 5 times.

Arms Behind Back Stretch

- Hold hands behind back, and grasp hands together.
- Pull shoulder blades back and down.
- Hold 5 seconds.
- Repeat 5 times.



Wrist Flexed/Fingers Straight

- Hold arm straight at waist height.
- With fingers of other hand, gently press down above the knuckles, bending wrist down. **Do not hold at the fingers to push down.** Hold for 5-10 seconds.
- Keep shoulder relaxed while stretching
- Repeat 2-3 times.

Wrist Extended/Fingers Pointing up

- Hold arm straight at waist height with palm facing away from you and fingers pointing up.
- Hold onto palm of hand and stretch wrist back. **Do not pull on fingers.**
- Make sure the fingers and thumb (on the hand that is pushing the other hand back) are kept together.
- Hold 5-10 seconds. Repeat 2-3 times.



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You Can be a Professional Athlete at Work

Successful sports figures set a great example for safe, common-sense preparation. Professional athletes don't begin a game or event without warm-ups and practice.

- Approach your work tasks the same way.
- Take time to stretch before and during work, whether in a more physical job or an office or laboratory setting.
- Consider regular walking, aerobics, swimming or other exercises to help reduce your risk of injury and illness, help you sleep better and improve your mood.
- Getting in shape makes it easier to take on today's activities and helps ensure you continue doing the things you care about in the future.

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Don't Let Weather Conditions Trip You Up

Be alert for these weather-related hazards:

- Wet surfaces outdoors, and wet floors inside homes, businesses and campus buildings
- Icy areas, including invisible “black ice”
- Windy, blustery days
- Leaf- or debris-covered walkways
- Snow and sleet that are slippery and can hide hazards



Use caution and common sense:



- Take it slow.
- Test the surface for ice before walking forward.
- Wipe your feet or remove wet shoes when coming indoors.
- Use handrails whenever they are available.
- Don't carry too many items, which can distract you, block your vision or put you off balance.
- Keep pathways clear around your home.
- Avoid walking and driving during storms and high winds. Wait until the weather improves if at all possible.



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Watch Your Step on Steps and Stairs!

Falls on steps and stairs are all too common, due to:

- Damaged surfaces or structures
- Slippery surfaces due to spills or worn flooring
- Items left on stairs
- Dim lighting
- Flaws such as Inconsistent tread height
- Walkers not following proper safety procedures on the stairs



Use Stairways Safely:

- Hold the handrail every time! Using the handrail should be as automatic as using your seatbelt when you're in a car.
- Use extra caution on unfamiliar steps and stairs.
- Watch for unexpected stair height changes, especially at the top and bottom of the stairway.
- Don't carry too many items. If your hands are full, use the elevator.
- Don't take the stairs if you're wearing loose sandals or shoes, extremely high heels or other potentially dangerous footwear.
- Keep stairways clear and in good repair. Report spills, trash or obstacles on the stairs if you cannot correct it yourself.



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Your Careful Behavior Prevents Falls

Common workplace falls include:



- Tripping over wires stretched across the floor
- Tripping over an open file drawer
- Leaning too far back in your chair
- Losing your balance when stepping over obstacles such as improperly stored materials
- Climbing or leaning on unstable shelves, tables or boxes
- Slipping on wet or debris-covered floors

Use good judgment and make basic workplace safety a habit:

- If you see a slip, trip or fall hazard, act immediately. Clean up spills, remove or repair broken chairs, unstable ladders, etc.
- If you cannot remove the hazard, place signs, cordon off the area with marking tape or cones to warn others, and place a work order so that Facilities Management is aware of the problem.
- Practice good judgment. Don't lean back in chairs or use unsafe means to reach items on high shelves.
- Always use proper tools and safety procedures.
- Wear proper footwear in the office, laboratory or shop. Be sure your footwear is in good repair and appropriate to your job and weather conditions.
- Keep aisles and walkways clear of power cords, boxes and other obstacles.



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