Workstation / Activity Ergonomics - Self Evaluation Checklist

Use this as a tool to evaluate your workstation or task. This is the same guide EHS uses for their evaluations. If you have any questions contact Mike Burke at 5-6391 or Burke@ehs.psu.edu.

Postures

1. **Head** and **neck** should be upright, or in-line with the torso (not tilted forward or back).
2. **Head**, **neck**, and **trunk** should face forward (not twisted).
3. **Trunk** should lean slightly back into backrest (about 100 degree recline angle, never forward).
4. **Shoulders** and **upper arms** should be in-line with the torso and relaxed (not elevated or cupped forward).
5. **Upper arms** and **elbows** should be close to the body (not extended outward to front or sides).
6. **Forearms**, **wrists**, and **hands** should be straight and in-line with elbows and same height as keyboard (elbows bent at about 90 degrees to the upper arm).
7. **Wrist s** and **hands** should be straight (not bent up/down or sideways toward the little finger).
8. **Thighs** should be parallel to the floor and the **lower legs** should be close to vertical (knees may be slightly elevated above hips, never below).
9. **Feet** should rest flat on the floor or a stable footrest.

Notes:

Seating

10. **Backrest** should provide support for your lower back (lumbar area) and you should sit back against cushion. The goal is for your torso and head to be supported by your chair and spine, not your muscles.
11. **Seat width** and **depth** should accommodate the specific user (seat pan not too wide or too long).
12. **Seat pan front edge** should not press against the back of your knees or lower legs (seat pan not too long).

13. **Seat** should have adequate cushioning and be rounded in front (no sharp edge).

14. **Armrests**, if used, should support both forearms while performing tasks and should not interfere with movement. Never support your body weight on chair arms.

**Notes:**

---

**Keyboard and Mouse**

15. **Keyboard / mouse platform(s)** if provided, should be stable and large enough to hold a keyboard and mouse.

16. **Keyboard / mouse platform(s)** if provided, should be flat so that wrists and forearms are not bent.

17. **Keyboard / mouse platform(s)** if provided, should be set about the same height as elbows so that wrists and forearms are not bent.

18. **Mouse or trackball** should be next to your keyboard and as close as possible to prevent reaching.

19. **Mouse or trackball** should be easy to use and the shape / size should fit your hand (not too big / small).

20. **Mouse** should never be squeezed. Rest your hand on hump and slide while keeping wrist straight / rigid.

21. **Mouse** speed should be set so that you only need to move an inch or two to move cursor all the way across the screen.

22. **Mouse or trackball** short-cut keys should be used as often as possible to minimize use in general.
   - SHIFT + ARROW KEY = Highlights text for cutting and pasting
   - CTRL + X = Cut
   - CTRL + C = Copy
   - CTRL + V = Paste
   - CTRL + S = Save
   - CTRL + P = Print
   - CTRL + O = Open
   - ENTER = "Ok"
   - ESC = "Cancel"
   - TAB = Switches between Windows buttons or screens
   - ALT + TAB = Switch between open Windows applications

   These “Shortcuts” are often quicker and more efficient as well.

23. **Wrist** and **hands** should not rest on sharp or hard edges.

**Notes:**

---

**Monitor**

24. **Monitor height** should be set so the top of the screen is at or slightly below eye level so you can read without tilting your head or neck down / back.

25. **Bifocal / trifocal users** should set monitor / chair height so you can read without tilting the head backward.
26. **Monitor distance or text size** should allow you to read without leaning your head, neck or trunk forward / backward.

27. **Monitor position** should be directly in front of you so you don't have to twist your head, neck or torso.

28. **Glare** (from windows, lights) should not be reflected on your screen, which can cause you to assume an awkward posture to clearly see information.

**Notes:**

---

**Work Area**

29. **Thighs** should have sufficient clearance under your computer desk or keyboard / mouse platform (thighs are not trapped).

30. **Legs** and **feet** should have sufficient space under your work surface so you are able to get close enough to the keyboard / input device. No extra clutter under desk.

**Notes:**

---

**Accessories**

31. **Document holder**, if provided, should be stable and large enough to hold the type of documents you most commonly work with.

32. **Document holder**, if provided, should be placed at about the same height and distance as the monitor screen so there is little head movement, or need to re-focus, when you look from the document to the screen. Or if possible, place slightly below and between you and the monitor.

33. **Document holder** should be used when available. Do not use as a picture frame or quick phone list holder.

34. **Wrist / palm rest**, if provided, should be padded and free of sharp or square edges that push on your wrists.

35. **Wrist / palm rest**, if provided, should allow you to keep your forearms flat, wrists / hands straight and in-line when using the keyboard/input device.

36. **Wrist / palm rest** should never be used as a solid rest. Palms or heels of hands should slide across pad when typing or using mouse.

37. **Telephone** should only be used with your head upright (not tilted) and your shoulders relaxed (not elevated). **Avoid cradling the phone.** Remember, if your hands are free, you do not need to cradle the phone.

38. **Adding machine** should be moved closer when in extended use. Do not reach and lean across desk.

39. **Printer** should be accessed by standing, rather than leaning and reaching. This will also give you a short break out of your chair while you review your work.

**Notes:**
General

40. Workstation and equipment should have sufficient adjustability so you are in a good working posture and can make occasional changes while performing tasks.

41. Workstation components and accessories should be maintained in good condition and function properly.

42. Work should be organized in a way that allows you to vary tasks with different activities, using different muscle groups when possible.

43. Take frequent micro-breaks or recovery pauses, out of your chair if sitting. If standing, take frequent sitting breaks.

44. Micro-breaks or task changes should be 2-3 minutes and occur at least every 30 minutes. If you are busy you can still take phone calls, read mail, file papers, etc.

Notes:

Lifting Forces on Lower Back
(Provided as a reference when evaluating your work tasks)

Risk of Injury

Low

Moderate

High

Force estimates based on the Michigan 2-D Static Strength Model

December 2008