

Tool Box Talk

Home Office Ergonomics

With normal office life being a thing of the past (for the time being) for a lot of Saskatchewan workers, it is important to ensure you have a space where you can be both comfortable and productive. This brings us to ergonomics.

The Merriam-Webster defines *ergonomics* as: “an applied science concerned with designing and arranging things people use so that the people and things interact most efficiently and safely.”

As safety transcends into our home life now more than ever, it is important to understand that where we work has a lot to do with how well we can do that work.

Here are some tips for to setting up your home office for success:

1. Adequate / Natural lighting - Lighting is essential to being productive. Ensure you have enough lights or lamps in your area to light up the space. Adequate lighting will reduce the chances of eye strain. Ensure that there isn't any glare from windows in your work area, angle the monitor away.
2. Comfortable Chair - if you have access to an ergonomic office chair, you're in luck. If you don't, try and find something comfortable to sit on for extended periods of time. Add a cushion if you're using a hard chair. Also practice good posture to promote circulation and avoid back and neck pain.
3. When deciding on your location and position at a work station, consider this:
 - a. Your feet should be flat on the floor and your thighs at a slightly downward angle
 - b. When sitting upright, your eyes should be level with the top of the screen.
 - c. When typing, your arms should be at approximately 90° ... use a key board tray to lower the keyboard if necessary. Keep frequently used items within arm's reach, so you're not stretching to get anything.

4. Take breaks- It can be easy to get carried away with work at home. Make sure you are scheduling and taking your breaks. Taking breaks has been found to improve productivity, so take it... you'll work better when you get back!

SLOUCHED POSTURE X OPTIMAL VIEWING ✓
NECK AND BACK PAIN X HEALTHY POSTURE ✓
BAD VIEWING X RELAXED ✓

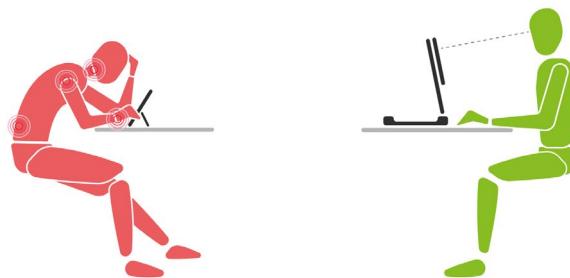


Photo: tstand.com

Keep in mind:

- Ergonomics is more than just a type of chair or keyboard. It doesn't matter how many pieces of equipment you buy, you have to be mindful of your body position and how it feels.
- Musculoskeletal injuries are cumulative, and people often don't think about it until the pain or discomfort begin to interfere with their daily life.
- Be sure to get up and move, stretch get away from the work area as you would in the office.
- Set alarms, or reminders to get up and move periodically! Remember to relax your shoulders, sit up straight and breathe deeply.