

LAPTOPS

Laptops are very popular pieces of equipment and considered essential for many workers. Problems arise when their users do not apply the same basic ergonomic principles when setting them up as they would for a PC. Many admit to not thinking about their position when sitting slumped on a sofa with their laptop on their knees.

Laptops have small keyboards, integral 'mice' and a screen that is too low because it is attached to the keyboard. This encourages a slumping, rounded shoulder position. Sustaining this over time can create neck, back, and shoulder or arm pain.

To avoid this there are various strategies available:-

1. The first is for the user to plug into a mainframe –providing this is in the correct position it will encourage a better posture.
2. Have a laptop stand with separate keyboard and mouse. The stand will raise the screen to eye level. The keyboard and mouse can then be in a normal position.

These bits of kit are not that bulky and can easily be placed into a laptop bag and are, therefore, available for use wherever necessary.

If a stand is not available raising the laptop onto a box will suffice to raise the screen level.

With the laptop set up correctly a chair can then be adjusted to match this set-up. There is then a better chance of maintaining a more neutral posture so there is less chance of pain developing. Movement is still important, even with a good set-up. It is important to change tasks and walk around.

If you spend time travelling between different sites consider the bag used to carry your laptop. A rucksack may be better for distributing weight evenly across both shoulders. Using trains and airports frequently might mean a wheeled bag is more appropriate.

Therefore, think about how you use your laptop, where you are using it and how to get it to these places safely. Never again sit with it on your knees while sitting on a sofa and wonder why you are uncomfortable!

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