

WORKSTATION POSTURES

The Health and Safety Executive produced documents in 1992 relating to Display Screen equipment i.e. computer screens and VDU's. These regulation guidelines are still relevant today as there are still people who are not fully aware of the correct positioning of their workstation.

If your general work area is not correct it can be a contributory factor in neck\shoulder\arm and wrist pain or low back pain.

The main points to consider are:-

Chair

Desk

Screen and keyboard position

Your chair must have an adjustable height. It should be padded and be able to support thighs and buttocks but should not go so far as digging in at the back of your knees. If possible the seat should be able to incline forwards or backwards for different tasks. There should be a lumbar support that is adjustable. The seat back should be angled slightly backwards. Armrests should allow the elbows to be flexed to 90° and should enable the user to get into the desk area.

The desk should be slightly below elbow height when sitting to use the keyboard – slightly above elbow height if writing.

The chair height is adjusted once pulled into the desk. A footstool may be required if feet do not touch the floor.

The desk needs to have space for keyboard and mouse and for these not to be placed immediately at the front of the desk. Telephones, documents, and your mouse should be within easy reach and should not require you to overstretch. The workspace must not be cluttered above or below the desk.

The screen must always be directly in front of you. The screen should be placed so that the top is at eye level. It should be 70 to 90 cm away and the tilt adjustable. Document holders should be placed either between keyboard and screen or to the side of the screen.

If the work area is positioned correctly your muscles and joints are maintained in a good position. However, you must still not sit all day in a static position using keyboard and monitor. After your tasks, move and adjust your position, get up and walk about frequently. Take a 20 minute walk at lunch. If you are sedentary all day plan to do more active exercises in the evening.