



## MONITOR

Your monitor should be at a height that allows you to keep your neck straight, as if your head were a ball balanced on your shoulders. In general, this means your eye level should be about one inch below the top of the monitor. If you wear progressive or bifocal lenses, this may mean positioning the monitor lower.

Make sure the monitor is straight ahead. Placing the monitor off to the side encourages awkward neck postures.

To check for glare, turn off your monitor and look for reflections. To avoid glare, place your monitor perpendicular to light sources such as windows and move lamps so they won't reflect in the screen.

The monitor should be as far away as is comfortable for reading. Your eyes work harder to focus on near objects for long periods of time, so be sure to give them a break often and regularly by looking away or changing tasks.

## STRETCHING

Stretching during your workday is a good to help prevent soreness and reduce the risk of injury.

Stretch to a point where you feel a mild tension, and relax as you hold the stretch.

If you are stretching correctly, the feeling of stretch should slightly subside as you hold the stretch.

Do long, sustained, mild stretches: do not 'bounce'.

Breathe slowly, rhythmically and under control.

Always stretch within your comfort limits, never to the point of pain.

Stop if the feeling grows in intensity or becomes painful as you hold the stretch.

Note: If you have had any recent surgery, muscle or joint problem, please consult your personal health care professional before starting a stretching or exercise program.

## OK, so now what?

Ergonomics goes beyond just proper equipment set up. Organize your work day so you break up computer work. Take short breaks every hour to get up (do some filing, talk to a coworker in person rather than email, get a drink of water). When using the computer for long periods of time, use the 20/20/20 rule: for every 20 minutes at the computer, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Finally, try stretching: an online search for "office stretches" should turn up plenty of ideas.

## Who can help me?

The Safety Office offers ergonomic assessments for all University of Winnipeg employees. Call 786.9894 to arrange an appointment. For more information on ergonomics, visit the Safety Office website at [www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/safety-safety](http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/safety-safety).

# OFFICE ERGONOMICS



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WINNIPEG

## What is ergonomics?

Ergonomics is the study of how workspace and job design affect worker health and well-being. It includes factors such as physical workspace design, adjustability, job design (time and length of breaks, variety of tasks, and pace of work), as well as individual work style.

## Why is ergonomics so important?

The way you work affects your well-being. Many aches and pains associated with work are avoidable with a few simple adjustments. The aim of the University of Winnipeg Ergonomics Program is to provide education and resources to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal disorders and to maintain a healthy work force.

TO ARRANGE FOR AN  
ERGONOMIC ASSESSMENT  
OF YOUR WORKPLACE, CALL  
786.9894.

## How should I set up my workstation?

There are three main factors that increase risk of workplace-related injuries. They are:

1. Repetitive movements;
2. Awkward postures; and
3. Static postures.

You can reduce repetitive movements and awkward by setting up your workstation properly; to avoid static postures you will have to adopt good working habits like stretching during the day and taking breaks.

## Keyboard & Mouse

Find the correct keyboard height:

Relax your shoulders, keep your upper arms by your sides and bend your elbows and extend your hands so that your lower arms are parallel to the ground. Keep your wrists straight. Your keyboard should be directly under your fingers in this position. Avoid anchoring your wrists on the desk or on a wrist rest, as this causes strain in your wrists.

To get your keyboard to the right height, adjust your chair height or use an adjustable keyboard tray. If you raise your chair, you may have to get a footrest so your feet can rest comfortably on the ground.

Your mouse should be as close as possible to the keyboard and at the same height. Use your arm, rather than your wrist, to guide the mouse.



## CHAIR

Most office chairs have a number of adjustments to make you more comfortable. Let's see what they are:

### Height:

The height from the floor should allow you to place both feet firmly on the floor, and have your weight evenly distributed along the seat. You should be able to sit with your back right against the backrest.

### Backrest/ tilt:

You may be able to adjust the tilt of the chair or the backrest angle. Generally, an angle of about 100 degrees will allow your lower back to be supported by the chair. Changing the tilt of your chair during the workday can help avoid static postures.



### Lumbar:

Your spine curves naturally in the shape of an 'S'. Lumbar support can help match the chair to that S-curve. If the chair is equipped with adjustable lumbar support, experiment until its height and depth most closely match your back.

### Armrests:

While armrests are not always necessary, if present they should not push your shoulders up, which can cause discomfort and tightness in your neck. Lower your armrests to where they do not interfere with your work, or have them removed entirely.