



## OFFICE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

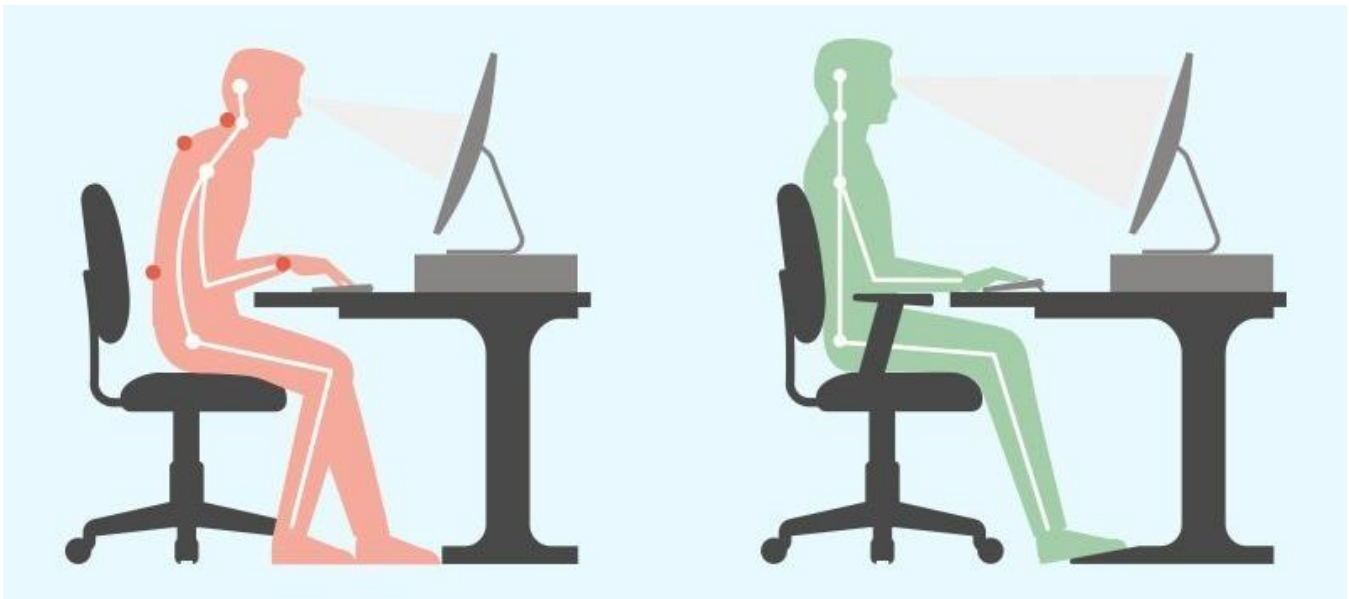
### Ergonomics Self-Assessment Worksheet

Ergonomics focuses on improving safety and efficiency in your working environment. Correct ergonomic design helps to reduce workspace-related discomfort, increasing job satisfaction, productivity, and well-being.

There are a number of significant modifications you can make on your own to alleviate or prevent pain and/or discomfort prior to requesting an ergonomic workspace evaluation. Provided below are guidelines for a healthy workspace. Please utilize this worksheet to review key areas of your workspace and make modifications to reduce eye strain and stress on your muscles, joints, tendons, and nerves.

#### ***Basic Comfort Factors***

1. To avoid eye strain, adjust the brightness and direction of area lighting when possible or use task lighting (such as a small targeted lamp) to minimize glare on monitor(s). Glare reducer films can also be utilized on monitor(s) to assist with viewing comfort.
  - a. To test your monitor(s) for glare, turn your monitor(s) off. If the screen has reflection, you have glare. Check for the source of the light. If it is a window, adjust the position of your monitor(s) so it/they are parallel to the window, or cover the window to deflect the light, if this is an option.
2. Whenever possible, alternate job tasks throughout your work day. This will reduce cumulative fatigue and allow different sets of muscles to be used with different postures.
3. Take micro-breaks of ten to sixty seconds at least once per hour to rest and relax body parts, especially if you use a computer or are engaged in static or repetitive work tasks.
  - a. Use the 20/20/20 rule: take a 20-second break every 20 minutes and look at least 20 feet away.
4. Take longer breaks to move your body, either within your workspace or by taking a short walk. Stretch, clear your head, and rest your eyes.
  - a. Drink an adequate amount of water to encourage breaks.
5. Anytime you walk, stand, sit, or run, make sure you are practicing good posture. If you notice that you are slouching or exhibiting other habits of bad posture, correct your alignment right away. Consider these tips and tricks to ensure good posture:
  - a. Place a note in your workspace that says “posture” as a reminder to check in with yourself, or set a daily phone alarm during a time you typically find yourself slouching or getting sleepy.
  - b. During a micro-break, focus on lengthening your spine and cycling through the tightening and relaxing of your waist and lower core muscles a few times.
  - c. Avoid holding your cellphone at an angle that causes you to stare downward, straining your neck. Instead, try positioning your cellphone directly in front of you.
  - d. Avoid overprotection of your posture by maintaining an overall relaxed position and refraining from continual clenching of your muscles or adopting an unnatural, stiff posture.



### ***Chair Adjustment & Posture***

As in the photo on the right, correct posture and proper use of your chair to support your back will help alleviate pain in your shoulders and lower and upper back.

- Raise or lower your seat to ensure your thighs are parallel to the floor with your feet flat on the floor. If your desk is high enough that adjusting your chair to the appropriate height pulls your feet off the floor, a footrest may be used.
- Your knees should be at the same height as your hips, with thighs and hips parallel to the floor or angled slightly downward. When seated, your torso and legs should be at a 90-degree angle (or slightly greater) to avoid leaning forward.
- Adjust seat depth to maintain two inches of space between the back of your knees and the front edge of the seat. If the seat is too deep, adjust your chair if possible, or use a lower back pillow to help compensate.
- Adjust backrest height to comfortably fit the small of your back. The back support should make contact with the small curve in your lower back. Lean back and relax in your chair to allow the backrest to support your upper body.
- Place shoulders in a relaxed position with upper arms hanging at the sides of your body. Hands, wrists, and forearms should be straight, in-line, and roughly parallel to the floor.
- You should be able to move freely with your chair, whether on carpet or a hard surface.
- With a standing desk, you should stand with your head back and hips upright with an 'S' curve in your spine. Also, match your desk to your height (set your standing desk at approximately elbow height) and follow the guidelines above as to the positioning of your arms, hands, wrists, and forearms.

## **Monitor Adjustment**

Your monitor(s) should be adjusted properly to reduce the strain on your neck and eyes.

- Position monitors directly in front of you and in front of the keyboard, aligning the monitor with the midline of your body.
- Ensure that your monitor is placed within arm's distance for viewing. Keep in mind that placing the monitor too far back might promote you to sit on the edge of your seat or lean forward to compensate for the distance.
- The top one-third of the monitor screen should be at eye level. This minimizes the potential for neck tilting forward or backward. If you wear bifocal, trifocal, or progressive lenses, you may need to lower the monitor screen to avoid tilting your head back while viewing.
- Use a document holder to help you scan between the document and the screen. This may include a holder that is at the same height as your monitor or a holder that is placed between the keyboard and monitor.
- Check the font size and color settings that you are using. Text that is too small or inadequate coloring may cause you to lean forward to see the monitor.

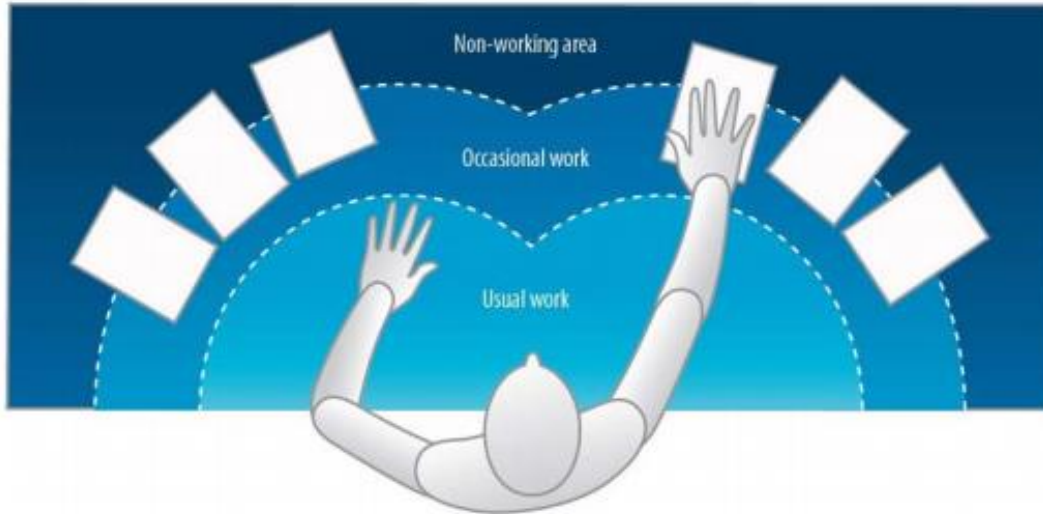
## **Keyboard, Mouse, & Phone Position**

Working long hours on the computer can strain your wrists, making it important to optimize wrist position when sitting or standing.

- Place the keyboard in a flat position directly in front of and aligned with your monitor(s).
- Check to make sure the risers on the underside of the keyboard remain in a flat position to avoid positioning the keyboard at an upward angle.
- Your keyboard should be positioned at a height that allows your wrists to be in a straight line with your elbows. Your elbows should rest comfortably and be anchored at your sides equal to a 90-degree angle.
- Avoid lifting your shoulders upward or shrugging to access your keyboard.
- If you use a keyboard tray, make sure it is flat or in a slight downward tilt away from you.
- Place your mouse at the same level as and next to your keyboard on the right or left.
- Use your entire arm to move your mouse, gliding the heel of your palm over the mousing surface.
- Do not hold onto the mouse or hover your hand over it when it is not in use.
- Position the phone close to your workspace to avoid extended reaching and forward leaning while dialing and/or answering calls.

## **Workspace Layout**

After arranging the main components of your workspace, properly position other desk items.



**Usual Work Zone** = frequently used objects

- To find your usual work zone, reach your arms out to the side, moving them from this position until your hands meet in at the center of your body in front of you. You should not be bending or stretching to reach anything that you frequently use.

**Occasional Work Zone** = objects used less often, but at least occasionally

**Non-Working Zone** = rarely used objects that are moved only when needed

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Once you complete this Ergonomics Self-Assessment Worksheet, re-evaluate your level of discomfort and/or pain in two or more weeks. If you are still experiencing concerns with your workspace, complete and submit the Ergonomic Workspace Evaluation Request, found on the UMKC Human Resources Forms page: <https://info.umkc.edu/hr/hr-service-center/forms/>.

Contact the Office of Affirmative Action with any questions:

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