

ERGO BULLETIN

Ergonomic Tips for Sitting Comfortably

As a kid, we all remember being told to “Sit Up Straight!” Sitting up straight with your ankles, hips and knee joints all at 90 degrees causes the pelvis to rotate back which can lead to muscle tension, a flattening of the low back and increased pressure on the lumbar discs. The latest research suggests there is a better way to sit for comfort, productivity and injury prevention. Try these ergonomic tips for sitting comfortably whether you are at the office, in your car, or watching television.

Abdominals:

Lightly engage abdominals to further support the lower back while seated.

Legs:

Try to keep equal weight on both sides of your buttocks and thighs. DO NOT cross your legs! Set the seat pan depth so you have two to three inches between the back of your calves and the chair's front edge. The seat pan should be flat or tilted slightly forward. Your knees should be slightly below your hips.

Feet:

Set the overall height of your chair for your upper body and NOT your feet. Your feet should be out in front of knees and NOT tucked under your chair. If your feet are not fully supported by the floor, use a footrest or other object (stack of copy paper) to keep you comfortable.

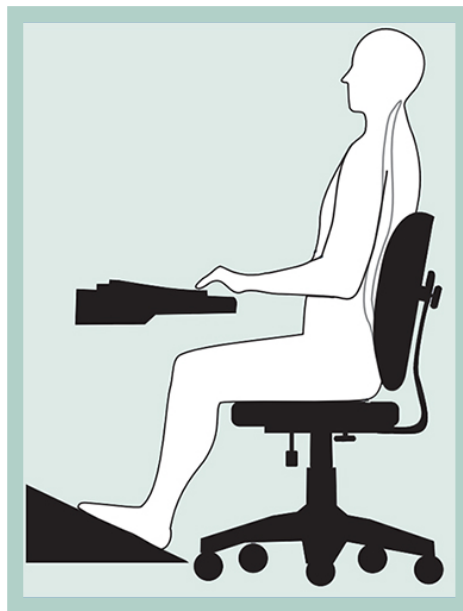


Image courtesy of Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia

Head:

Center the weight of your head over your shoulders. Keep the chin slightly down, allowing the eyes to gaze downward 15 to 20 degrees below horizontal.

Shoulders, Arms & Wrists:

Keep shoulders down and relaxed. Keep your elbows comfortably at your side and opened to between 90 and 100 degrees. Wrist should be straight and supported by a keyboard palm rest when not typing.

Back:

The tilt or back angle of the chair should be set so that your back is supported between 95 and 105 degrees. If your chair has a lumbar support adjustment, use it to support your natural lumbar curve. Place your weight into your seatback to support your back and to better distribute the load on your spine. Try an occasional stretch such as the low-back stretch or just stand and move periodically.



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