



ERGO BULLETIN

Ergonomic Tips for Keyboard Palm Rest Use

The term “wrist rest” is actually a misnomer. Ideally, we don’t want to have anything in contact with the wrist itself, i.e. edge of the work surface, jewelry, etc. while we are typing or resting at the keyboard. The term “palm rest” is a more accurate title and describes both how and when to use this valuable workstation accessory.



PHOTO A



PHOTO B

When typing, the wrists should be in a neutral position, i.e. wrists in-line with the forearm (**Photo A**) as they float over the palm rest. If you float the hands over the palm rest while typing, you will initiate movement from the shoulders and elbows, which keeps the fingers relaxed and the wrists straight, especially when reaching for keys at the outside edge of the keyboard. While taking a break from typing (**Photo B**), the palm of the hands should make contact with the palm rest and the fingers should easily reach the home keys (left – a, s, d, f and right j, k, l, ;). Remember to keep the wrist straight and allow the fingers to bend naturally.

Palm rests, when used properly, help to keep the wrists in a healthy posture while reducing potential tension and stress in the shoulders and neck by equally supporting the weight of the arms at the hands.

Key Points of Using a Keyboard Palm Rest

- Purchase a palm rest that matches the width, height, and slope of the front edge of your keyboard. Palm rests come in a variety of materials, i.e. foam, gel, beads, etc., so find the one that works best for you.
- Adjust the height of your chair for the proper keying posture, i.e. your shoulders should be relaxed, elbows at your side and flexed to about 90 degrees with wrists straight. Your keyboard should now be slightly below the height of the hands.
- Your palm rest should be positioned flush with the edge of the desk and your keyboard flush to the palm rest. Try double sided tape to hold your palm rest in the proper position.
- Your hands should move freely and be elevated above the palm rest while typing. When resting, the palm rest should contact the heel or palm of your hand and not your wrist!
- Adjust or remove your chair’s armrests so they don’t get in the way of your good typing posture and use of the palm rest.

No one office accessory, such as the palm rest, can prevent musculoskeletal injury. A balanced ergonomics approach should involve a complete assessment of your workstation, review of your “workstyle” techniques and your personal health habits. A palm rest, if used properly, can be an effective tool in reducing discomfort and injury while helping you to be more productive.



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