

Workstation Checklist

Healthshare Information for Guided Patient Management

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Introduction

Healthshare is committed to improving your health and wellbeing. This information leaflet is produced by health professionals who are expert in improving musculoskeletal conditions. The information is based on the latest available evidence from research in the field. If you are not sure of any of the given information, please contact our physiotherapy helpline for further information.

Common problems when using a computer


Musculoskeletal problems in computer users are common due to:

- Prolonged, stationary, low-level muscle work.
- Prolonged sitting, sometimes in awkward positions.
- Over-use of some joints and muscles.
- Poor work-station set up.
- Eye strain.

Relationships with work colleagues, particularly with the management team, can also affect how we think and feel about the problem and can add to the musculoskeletal pain. The most commonly reported issues are high work demand, time pressure and poor job satisfaction.



Neck, back and shoulder pain are the most common problems reported among computer users with wrist, forearm and finger pain also seen as well as headaches due to eye strain.




The Checklist below is suitable for anyone to use to help reduce the risk of these problems at work. It is in line with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations. We recommend that you work through the questions about your current workstation: “YES” answers require no further action; “NO” answers may need some attention to change the way you are currently using your computer. You can record your suggestions in the 'Action to Take' column. This form also suggests different ways of reducing the risks. Remember that the checklist only covers the workstation and work environment. You may also need to think about risks from other aspects of your work.


Problems to look for	Tick		Ways of reducing risk	Action to take
	YES	NO		
1. Display screens				
Are the characters clear and readable? <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; border-radius: 10px; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> Health and Safety </div> ✓ </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> Health and Safety </div> ✗ </div>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make sure the screen is clean and that cleaning materials are available. Check that the text and background colours work well together.	
Is the text size comfortable to read?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Software settings may need adjusting to change text size.	
Is the image stable, i.e. free of flicker and jitter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Try using different screen colours to reduce flicker, eg. darker background and lighter text. If the problems still exist, get the set-up checked by the equipment supplier.	
Is the screen's specification suitable for its intended use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	For example, intensive graphic work or work requiring fine attention to small details may require large display screens.	
Are the brightness and/or contrast adjustable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Separate adjustment controls are not essential provided the user can read the screen easily at all times.	
Does the screen swivel and tilt? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Swivel and tilt may not be built in; you can add a swivel and tilt mechanism. However, you may need to replace the screen if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> swivel/tilt is absent or unsatisfactory; your work is intensive; and/or you have problems getting the screen to a comfortable position. 	

Problems to look for	Tick		Ways of reducing risk	Action to take
	YES	NO		
1. Display screens/contd.				
Is the screen free from glare and reflections? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use a mirror placed in front of the screen to check where reflections are coming from. You might need to move the screen or even the desk and/or shield the screen from the source of reflections. Screens that use dark characters on a light background are less prone to glare and reflections.	
Are adjustable window coverings provided in an adequate condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check that blinds work. Blinds with vertical slats can be more suitable than horizontal ones. If these measures do not work, consider anti-glare screen filters as a last resort and seek specialist help.	
2. Keyboards				
Is the keyboard separate from the screen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This is a requirement, unless the task makes it impracticable (eg. where there is a need to use a portable computer).	
Does the keyboard tilt?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tilt may not be built in but may be added as an extra component.	
Is it possible to find a comfortable keying position?    	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Try pushing the display screen further back to create more room for the keyboard, hands and wrists. Users of thick, raised keyboards may need a wrist rest.	

Problems to look for	Tick		Ways of reducing risk	Action to take
	YES	NO		
2. Keyboards/contd.				
Does the user have good keyboard technique?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Training can help to prevent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands bent up at the wrist; • Hitting the keys too hard; • Overstretching the fingers. 	
Are the characters on the keys easily readable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyboards should be kept clean. If characters still can't be read, the keyboard may need modifying or replacing. Use a keyboard with a matt finish to reduce glare and/or reflection.	
3. Mouse, trackball etc.				
Is the device suitable for the tasks it is used for?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If you are having problems, try a different device. The mouse and trackball are general-purpose devices suitable for many tasks, and available in a variety of shapes and sizes. Alternative devices like touch screens may be better for some tasks (but can be worse for others).	
Is the device positioned close to you?  	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Most devices are best placed as close as possible, eg. right beside the keyboard. Try : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prevent over-reaching; • Not to leave your hand on the device when it is not being used; • To keep a relaxed arm and straight wrist. 	
Is there support for your wrist and forearm?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support could be from the desk surface or the arm of a chair. If not, a separate supporting device may help. You should be able to find a comfortable working position with the device.	
Does the device work smoothly at a speed that suits you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See if cleaning is required (eg. of mouse ball and rollers). Check that the work surface is suitable. A mouse mat may be needed.	
Can you easily adjust software setting for the speed and accuracy of the pointer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You may need training in how to adjust the device settings.	

Problems to look for	Tick		Ways of reducing risk	Action to take
	YES	NO		
4. Software				
Is the software suitable for the task?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Software should help you carry out the task, minimise stress and be user-friendly.</p> <p>Check if you have had appropriate training in using the software.</p> <p>Software should respond quickly and clearly to user input, with adequate feedback, such as clear help messages.</p>	
5. Furniture				
<p>Is the work surface large enough for all the necessary equipment, papers etc?</p>  	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Create more room by moving printers and reference materials elsewhere.</p> <p>If necessary, consider new power and telecoms sockets, so equipment can be moved.</p> <p>There should be some scope for flexible rearrangement.</p>	
Can you comfortably reach all the equipment and papers you need to use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Rearrange equipment and papers to bring frequently used things within easy reach.</p> <p>A document holder may be needed.</p>	
Are surfaces free from glare and reflection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider mats or blotters to reduce reflections and glare.	
<p>Is the chair suitable?</p> <p>Is the chair stable?</p> <p>Does the chair have a working:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seat back height and tilt adjustment? • Seat height adjustment? • Swivel mechanism? • Castors or glides? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The chair may need repairing or replacing if you are uncomfortable, or cannot use the adjustment mechanisms.</p>	

Problems to look for	Tick		Ways of reducing risk	Action to take
	YES	NO		
5. Furniture/contd.				
<p>Is the chair adjusted correctly?</p>   	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>You should be able to carry out your work sitting comfortably.</p> <p>Consider training in how to adopt suitable postures while working.</p> <p>The arms of the chair may stop you getting close enough to use the equipment comfortably.</p> <p>Move any obstructions from under the desk.</p>	
Is the small of the back supported by the chair's backrest?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You should have a straight back, supported by the chair, with relaxed shoulders.	
Are your forearms horizontal and your eyes at roughly the same height as the top of the computer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adjust the chair height to get your arms in the right position, then adjust the computer height, if necessary.	
Are you feet flat on the floor, without too much pressure from the seat on the back of the legs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If not, a foot rest may be needed.	

Problems to look for	Tick		Ways of reducing risk	Action to take
	YES	NO		
6. Environment				
Is there enough room to change position and vary movement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Space is needed to move, stretch and fidget.</p> <p>Consider reorganising the office layout and check for obstructions.</p> <p>Cables should be tidy and not a trip or snag hazard.</p>	
Is the lighting suitable, and not too bright or too dim to work comfortably? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>You should be able to control light levels, by adjusting window blinds or light switches.</p> <p>Consider shading or repositioning light sources or providing local lighting with desk lamps (but make sure lights don't cause glare by reflecting off walls or other surfaces).</p>	
Does the air feel comfortable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Computers and other equipment may dry the air.</p> <p>Circulate fresh air if possible. Plants may help.</p> <p>Consider a humidifier if discomfort is severe.</p>	
Are levels of heat comfortable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Can the heating be better controlled?</p> <p>More ventilation or air-conditioning may be required if there is a lot of electronic equipment in the room. Or, can you move away from a heat source?</p>	
Are levels of noise comfortable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Consider moving sources of noise, like printers. If not, consider soundproofing or damping measures.</p>	

What should I do to avoid problems at work?

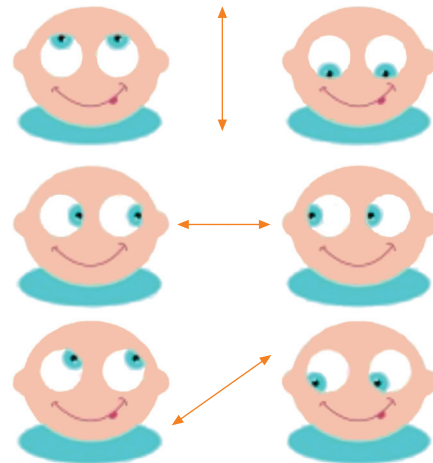
Check	Use this form to check your work station is correctly adjusted for your convenience.
Adjust	If not, adjust your computer work-station and your desk environment as recommended.
Break	Take regular breaks from your work-station to avoid prolonged sitting.
Task variation	Change your tasks where possible to avoid continuous loading on one particular group of muscles.
Exercise	Go for a brisk walk during your lunch break to avoid the prolonged sitting posture.
Stay active	Regular general exercise such as swimming, cycling, running or going to the gym is recommended if your work involves sitting at a desk for more than a few hours.

Avoiding eye strain & headaches

Enlarge the text, read offline, work in spurts, re-position your monitor, take relaxing breaks, adjust the monitor brightness & contrast settings or adjust the room lighting. In addition to this take regular eye tests and use corrective lenses where necessary. You may also find the exercises below helpful.

Eye exercises

- Move your eye ball up and down, sideways and diagonally.
- Repeat 10 times in each directions and take a break after each set of 10.
- Repeat this every 2 hours
- Also perform "Horizon scanning" - This means focusing on an object about 3 meters away for 15 seconds. You can do this every 30 minutes.



Neck exercises

- Turn your head sideways - try to touch your shoulder with your chin on both sides.
- Bend your head sideways - try to touch your shoulder with your ears.
- Repeat this 10 times on each side every 2 hours.



Chin retractions

Sit or stand straight. Slowly move your chin forwards and backwards. Repeat 10 times every 2 hours.



Shoulder exercises

Shoulder shrug

Sit or stand up straight and bring your shoulders up towards your ears. Hold for a count of 3 Seconds. Relax and repeat 5 times every 2 hours.

Shoulder Circles

Sit or stand up straight, circle your shoulders backwards and forwards five times, with your arms relaxed by the side. Repeat every 2 hours.



Upper back stretch

Reaching upper back stretch

Stand with your arms out in front and crossed over. Push your hands forward as far as possible and let your head fall forward. Hold for 15 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



Pectoral muscles stretch

Behind the back chest stretch

Stand upright and clasp your hands together behind your back. Slowly lift your hands upward. Do not lean forward while lifting your hands upward. Hold for 15 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



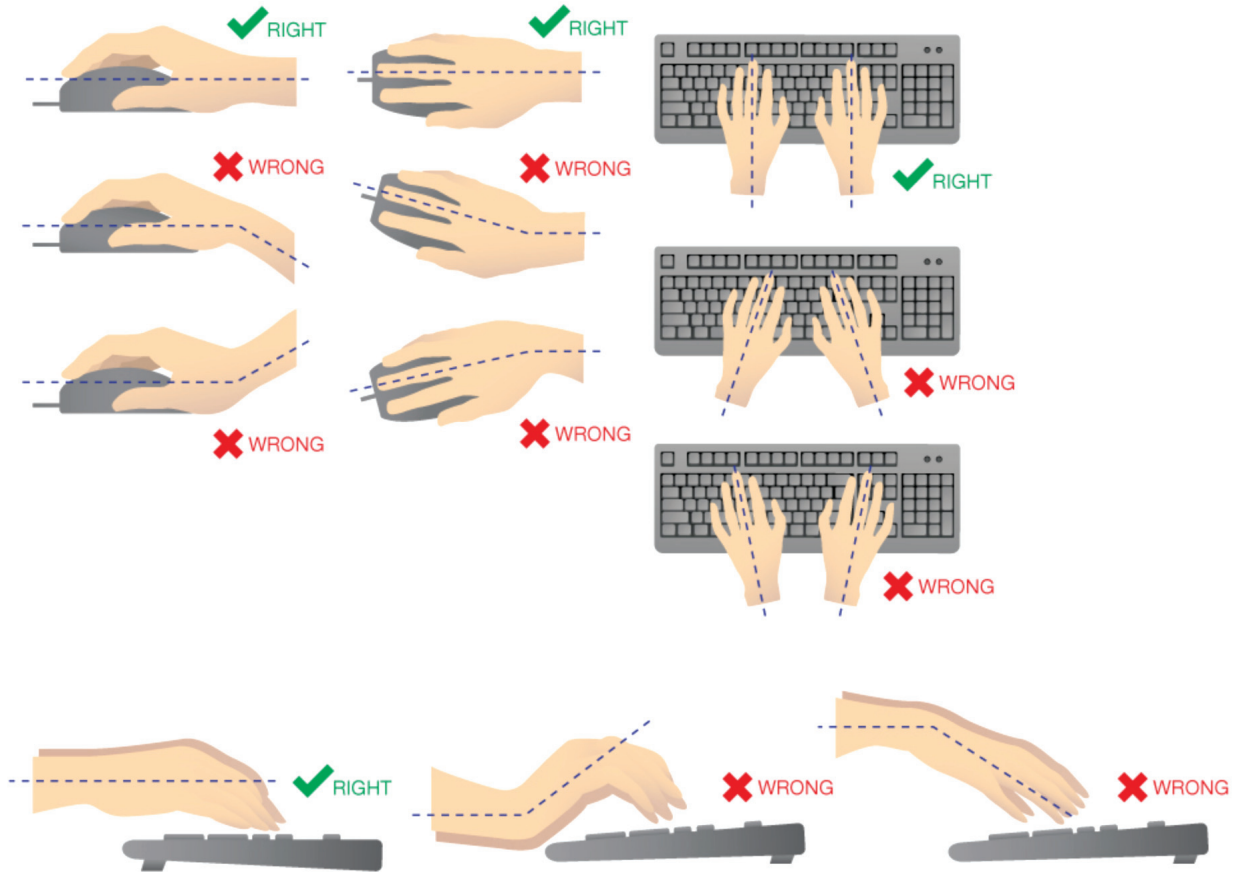
Wrist and forearm stretch

Rotating wrist stretch

Place one arm straight out in front and parallel to the ground. Rotate your wrist down and outwards and then use your other hand to further rotate your hand upwards. Hold for 15 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



Keyboard and mouse use



Mouse position on desk

The **over reach zone** should always be avoided.

The **convenience zone** should not be used for the bulk of the day, although it may not be harmful if used in short period of time.

The **easy reach zone** is the one to aim for at all times. This will help to minimise any injuries caused as a result of over stretching.



An ideal workstation

