

ERGONOMICS AND SIT-STAND WORKSTATIONS

If you're using a standing workstation, you've already made a move that offers additional movement opportunities throughout your workday.

Research shows that alternating between standing and sitting throughout the day provides the most benefit. Just as health issues develop with sitting too much, different problems can develop from standing too much. Studies show that standing 30 minutes at a time is a comfortable average for most – and many physical therapists recommend switching from sitting-height desk to standing height at least every hour. There are many options available on the market that easily change heights.

Just like a traditional desk situation, standing workstations have ergonomics standards to help you work most comfortably for you. The basics:

Posture

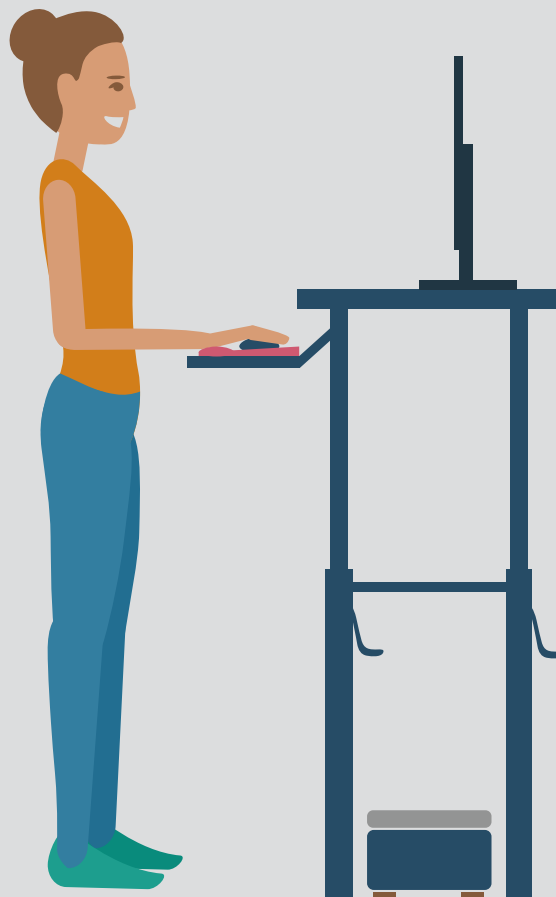
When using a standing workstation, keep your head, neck, torso and legs approximately in line and vertical. Use a footrest to shift your weight from foot to foot. Wear shoes that provide proper support. A good anti-fatigue or cushioned floor mat will provide shock absorption and support for your lower body.

Keyboard and mouse

Place your mouse and keyboard on the same surface and at a distance that allows you to keep your elbows close to your body. While typing or using your mouse, keep your wrists straight, your upper arms close to your body, and your hands at the level of your elbows. Use keyboard shortcuts to reduce extended mouse use. If possible, adjust the mouse's sensitivity so that you can use a light touch to operate it. Alternate the hand you use to operate the mouse by moving it to the other side of your keyboard.

Desk surface

Your desk needs to be deep enough to allow your monitor to fit directly in front of you and at least 20 inches away. The surface should allow you to keep your wrists straight and your hands at your elbows' level. A desk with a rounded front will prevent pressure on your wrists.



Telephone

If you frequently talk on the phone and type or write simultaneously, place your phone on speaker or use a headset rather than cradling the phone between your head and neck.

Monitor

Place the computer monitor directly in front of you, about an arm's length away. The top of the screen should be at or slightly below eye level. If you wear bifocals, lower the monitor an additional 1 to 2 inches (3 to 5 cm) for more comfortable viewing. Or better yet, ask your eye doctor about "computer prescription" lenses specifically designed for your work and workstation setup. Place your monitor so that the brightest light source is to the side.

If you have dual monitors, the monitors' location depends on the percentage of time you spend on each monitor and the type of work you are doing. If you use both monitors equally, place them close together on an angle in front of you with their edges touching. If you use one monitor more than 80% of the time, position it directly in front of you and the other monitor off to the side.

Key objects

Keep key objects – such as your telephone, stapler or printed materials – close to your body to prevent excessive stretching.