



Ergonomic Workstation Self-Assessment Tool

Guide

Choose the section that best describes your symptoms and review the items in the relevant section

Uncomfortable Chair – the chair is the basis of sound workstation ergonomics. If you are experiencing discomfort with your chair please complete the following self-assessment tool.

Workstation	Y/N	Action	Action Details / Date
Chair feels uncomfortable?		Use the Self-Setup Guide to ensure the appropriate adjustments	Extremely
Are all the chair adjustments working?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">No – report the chair fault to Office ServicesYes – continue to monitor the chair settings regularly	I think so
Feet don't touch the floor?		Lower the chair to allow the feet to sit flat on the floor; place chair at desk	Slightly
Are your elbows just slightly below the wrists while they are on the desk? Shoulders are relaxed?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">No - adjust the chair so the desk height feels comfortable?Yes – this is probably a good working height for you	No
Does the chair height and desk height now feel comfortable?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">If the chair seems too low for the desk – you may need to raise the chair and use a footrest for your feet (if they do not touch the floor)If you can't lower the chair enough to be comfortable at the desk, contact SEW for an assessment	No
Does the chair feel good for my back?		No? Check the Self-Setup Guide and check <ul style="list-style-type: none">the position of the lumbar support - adjust accordinglyensure you are sitting well back into the chair – adjust the seat back tiltthe seat pan adjustment or slope of the seat pan to suit	Feels very bad! Back hurts during the day. Going home with sore back.
Do my thighs feel comfortable in the chair?		No? Check the Self-Setup Guide and check the <ul style="list-style-type: none">seat back is not set further than 110° tilted backseat pan is not tilted up at the frontheight of the chair is appropriate for the desk and your feet	No
Do my buttocks feel comfortable in the chair?		No? Check the Self-Setup Guide and check the <ul style="list-style-type: none">seat height is appropriatepadding or netting on the seat pan is not damaged or wornseat back is not set further than 110° tilted backseat pan is not tilted too far up or down at the frontseat is in the correct position at the desk and centrally aligned with monitors	No
Does the chair still feel uncomfortable?		If the problem appears to be something outside the issues mentioned above further intervention may be required – contact SEW	Yes

Ergonomic Workstation Self-Assessment Tool

Guide

Headaches – Headaches can have a number of causes and / contributing factors. If you are experiencing headaches at work, please complete the following self-assessment tool. If headaches persist, consult your medical practitioner.			
Factor	Signs/ symptoms	Action	Action Details / Date
Dehydration - Not drinking enough water / other fluids	Concentrated dark urine, headaches, irritability, fatigue, loss of concentration	Drink more water; Drink less coffee, tea, soft drinks, energy drinks	I drink roughly 5 liters of water a day
Fatigue - Lack of good quality (REM) sleep	Fatigue, loss of concentration, headaches, eye strain	Regular sleep times and patterns Avoid sugars, caffeine etc. before bed Avoid screen time before bed	Due to my condition I can suffer from fatigue.
Eye strain - Strain on the eyes and eye muscles Long periods at computer	Blurred vision, difficulty in focusing on work, tired eyes, headaches, loss of concentration	Check lighting and glare, take regular breaks Check glasses, check for other eye problems with optometrist	I wear glasses as I have issues with distance and close
Work/ home Stressors - Work and home stressors	Feeling of lack of control, other medical and psychological symptoms Often difficult to recognise	Identify stressors and act upon them Seek psychological and or medical assistance as required e.g. EAP	Sometimes I am stressed but usually it's at night because the pain can be bad and I struggle to sleep.
General fatigue- Lifestyle including diet, sleep, relationships, work and non-work activities	Always feeling tired, headaches, lethargy, tiredness, lack of drive etc.	Review lifestyle choices, exercise, health, diet, weight, sleep etc., seek medical advice as required	Work is what keeps me motivated and distracted, so there is no issue. The busier I am the better.
Poor work postures - long term postures and frequent tasks habits can overload the body's muscular and joint system	Headaches, vision problems, widespread or localised muscular and soft tissue tightness and discomfort, loss of concentration, fatigue	Review all work habits and postures Review workstation set up and use of equipment and tools	My condition will affect me.
Chair feels uncomfortable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform the appropriate self-assessment for chair discomfort 		I need a different chair



Ergonomic Workstation Self-Assessment Tool

Guide

Workstation – although workstations / monitors may be set up according to instructions, you may still experience some difficulties.		
Workstation	Action	Action Details / Date
Does the desk feel too high or too low to work comfortably?	Desk height is often not necessary to change but may be a problem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the chair seems too low for the desk – you may need to raise the chair and use a footrest to raise your feet • If you can't lower the chair enough for the desk further intervention may be needed 	I love the desk. Just the chair needs to be changed
Monitor/s too close?	Too close or too far away can cause neck, shoulder or eye strain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-adjust the monitor distance to where you feel the most comfortable • Check for any glare, reflections or flickering lights that may be hindering vision 	Perfect
Monitor/s not aligned?	Align self directly in front of your monitor/s and to the centre of the screen (Self Set-up Guide) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all cords/cables are long enough to allow for adjustment of your workstation • Check you are not seated in rotated or tilted position in order to use the monitors correctly • Check dual / multiple monitors are positioned correctly for the desired use – e.g. primary and secondary monitors / dual or multi-use monitors 	Perfect
Performing frequent or prolonged data entry from paper to computer?	Frequent, prolonged moving of eyes from one focal length to another can cause tired eye muscles resulting in poor focus, eye strain, fatigue and headaches. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place paperwork in the space between the keyboard and monitor, using document holder if possible to maintain the same focal length between monitor and document • Give the eyes short but frequent rests e.g. look into the distance, shut the eyes / place the hands over the eyes for 30 seconds, allow eyes to go out of focus for 30 seconds and slowly refocus • Check the focal length of glasses with your optometrist / Retest eyes approx. every 12 mths 	No – This job has variety
Is your posture slumped?	Good posture is essential for good circulation, balance and control. Check <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you are sitting well into the chair and not on the front of the seat • the back of the chair is not too far back or forward • lumbar support is engaged and comfortable • your feet are firmly on the floor or footrest • you are centred in the chair and not tilted or twisted 	Yes
Do you stop every 45 minutes for a small posture break?	A brief posture pause approximately every 45 minutes, involving a stand up, stretch and a short walk can help reduce many causes of discomfort; and is good for the body and for the brain.	Always.
Are you working longer than 8 hours at the desk?	Dehydration, mental fatigue, stress, lack of movement, poor diet and decreased circulation can all contribute to headaches. Take frequent short breaks and eat meals away from the desk.	No

Ergonomic Workstation Self-Assessment Tool

Guide

Neck, back and or shoulder discomfort - Holding the neck, back and / or shoulders in one position for prolonged periods can cause areas of poor circulation, which along with muscle fatigue may result in discomfort including aching, burning and occasional sharp twinges of pain, which may increase in intensity and duration causing pain, fatigue, general tightness and restriction of movements. If you are experiencing neck, back and or shoulder discomfort at work, please complete the following self-assessment tool.

Workstation	Action	Action Details /
Does the desk feel too high or too low to work comfortably?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure chair set up correctly (Self Setup Guide) • Chair seems too low for the desk –raise chair and use a footrest to raise your feet • If you can't lower the chair enough for the desk further intervention may be needed 	No
Does your chair feel too high or too low to work comfortably?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move adjusted chair to desk; adjust chair height to desk in order to work comfortably; you may need to use a footrest. • If you can't lower the chair enough for the desk further intervention may be needed 	The style of this chair is shocking
Do your elbows sit comfortably at desk height?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure you are sitting with your bottom well back against the back of the chair and in a supported posture – now you may assess your shoulder and elbow position • The shoulders should feel relaxed and the elbows sit comfortably between 90° and 110° while working at the desk 	No
Do you use a 'corner station'? If yes, does it have a curved corner or a sharp edge?	The body finds it difficult to align itself to curves; often resulting in the body and /or neck being rotated whilst working (a triangular insert into the corner may help).	Yes – don't know how to describe it. But I like it
Does your chair have arms which do not allow you to get close to the desk?	Chair arms can impede getting close to your work, causing you to slump or lean forward. Over time this can cause neck, shoulder, back and /or arm strain. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove and or adjust / shorten / swing / lower arms, to get the chair close to the desk to allow comfortable work position 	Kind of, due to height adjustment
Is your chair aligned directly in front of the centre of your monitor?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure your body position is symmetrical to avoid subtle body strains over time • Ensure your chair is in line with the centre of your monitor 	yes
Does your chair have enough adjustments to get comfortable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassess your chair set up - know your chair's capabilities 	Don't know
Does your chair have an adjustable lumbar support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairs will have a combination of depth, density, height and or level lumbar support adjustments - know your chair's capabilities 	I don't feel it
Is this set up to support your lower back?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjust the height of the lumbar support to fit into the deepest part of the back's curve while sitting into the chair 	NOPE
Are you sitting well back into the chair at all times?	For the lumbar support to provide the support you need, you must be sitting well into the chair with your bottom pushing back into the lower part of the back of the chair	Not really



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Workstation	Action	Action Details /
Are you sitting in the edge of the chair?	The chair cannot work for you if you are sitting on the front edge of the seat. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the chair does not allow you to sit well back in the chair, it may be too big for you	No
Does your chair feel level and stable?	The chair must be in good condition and firm and level in order to fully support you. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the chair appears to be faulty or broken, report it to Supervisor	No
Are you sitting in the centre of the chair?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure your body position is symmetrical to avoid subtle body strains over time• Ensure you sitting in the centre of the chair and aligned with the monitor / keyboard	No
Is the monitor screen more than or less than an arm's length from you while sitting in your chair?	The normal eye focal length for your monitor is the length of the arm from the body to the finger tip If you are wearing bifocals or strong glasses, you may need to adjust – if you are having difficulty ask your optometrist what the focal length is for your glasses If you have a non-standard size screen, you may need to adjust accordingly	No – Full arms length
Is the top of the monitor level with the centre of your forehead?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure the monitor is at the optimum height by adjusting the monitor height so the top of the monitor is the same height as the centre of your forehead. This will line your vision up with the centre of the screen• The eyes should be able to focus on the middle of the screen easily	Probably just above my head
Is your keyboard set up some distance from the edge of the desk?	Reaching out in front to use the keyboard will cause undue strain on the arms, shoulders and neck over time <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep the keyboard close to the body near the edge of the desk	Feels good
Does your mouse 'creep' away from you as you work?	'Mouse creep' is a common problem with all mouse actions. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep bringing the mouse in close to the keyboard to reduce strain on the shoulder, neck and arm muscles	Mouse is great
Does your keyboard move out of parallel with the edge of the desk over time?	This is a tell-tale sign that you are not lined up symmetrically with your workstation. The most common fault is that the screen is slightly offset to your line of vision and you are rotating slightly to accommodate this position and hence the keyboard will slowly adapt to the rotated position <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check your position to ensure you are lined up to the centre of the monitor screen	No not really



Ergonomic Workstation Self-Assessment Tool

Guide

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Workstation	Action	Action Details /
Are any of your leads/cables too short to adjust to the best position?	Difficulty in moving the monitor, keyboard, mouse or computer may be due to short leads / cables – Contact IT (LogIT) for assistance	No its all good
Do you use more than two monitors?	You may need to reassess your position and set up if using more than two monitors – Self Setup Tool	yes
Have you set up the monitors correctly as either dual monitors or main monitor with a secondary screen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If using dual (or more) monitors equally or simultaneously, it is important to have the chair set up exactly in between the two monitors and that the monitors are angled equally to meet the line of vision• If the second screen is used only for some work as an auxiliary screen, set the chair in front of the midline of the main screen and angle the auxiliary screen accordingly	Main monitor with second screen
Do you spend a lot of time transferring data from a hard copy document to the screen via the keyboard and mouse?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prolonged screen work with changing focal lengths can create eyestrain and fatigue over time• Check your chair posture, keyboard and mouse positions regularly	No
If yes, do you use a document holder?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Place the document / and or holder between the keyboard and screen• The positioning of the document and or use of a document holder can help to reduce the frequent change of focal length and strain on the eyes and neck	
If yes, is it set up to one side?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The best place for a document holder is in the line of vision to the screen in front of the keyboard rather than to one side. Side mounted document holders should only be used short term• A centre mounted document holder is best for long term / frequent use	
Is lighting or glare a problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor lighting or glare or reflections on the screen may cause you to position yourself in an awkward posture. Reassess your position	Nope

Ergonomic Workstation Self-Assessment Tool

Guide

Forearm and wrist discomfort - Forearm and wrist problems may develop as a result of the workstation setup, work habits and or workload issues; or as a result of a pre-existing problem aggravated by prolonged use of a mouse and keyboard. The discomfort may lead to more significant problems if not addressed. If you are experiencing forearm and wrist discomfort at work, please complete the following self-assessment tool.

Workstation	Action	Action Details /
Do you stop every 45 minutes for a small posture break?	A brief posture pause approximately every 45 minutes, involving a stand up, stretch and a short walk (e.g. get a drink, rest room break, pick up print) can help reduce many causes of discomfort; and is good for the body and for the brain	Yes
Does your chair have arms which do not allow you to get close to the desk?	Chair arms can impede getting close to your work, causing you to slump or lean forward. Over time this can cause neck, shoulder, back and /or arm strain. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove and or adjust / shorten / swing / lower arms, to get the chair close to the desk to allow comfortable work position 	Yes
Is your chair aligned directly in front of the centre of your monitor?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure your body position is symmetrical to avoid subtle body strains over time Ensure your chair is in line with the centre of your monitor 	Yes
Does your chair have enough adjustments to get comfortable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reassess your chair set up - know your chair's capabilities 	No
Does your chair have an adjustable lumbar support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairs will have a combination of depth, density, height and or level lumbar support adjustments - know your chair's capabilities 	No
Is this set up to support your lower back?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust the height of the lumbar support to fit into the deepest part of the back's curve while sitting into the chair 	No
Are you sitting well back into the chair at all times?	For the lumbar support to provide the support you need, you must be sitting well into the chair with your bottom pushing back into the lower part of the back of the chair	No
Are you sitting in the edge of the chair?	The chair cannot work for you if you are sitting on the front edge of the seat. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the chair does not allow you to sit well back in the chair, it may be too big for you 	No
Does your chair feel level and stable?	The chair must be in good condition and firm and level in order to fully support you. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the chair appears to be faulty or broken, report it to your Supervisor 	No
Are you sitting in the centre of the chair?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure your body position is symmetrical to avoid subtle body strains over time Ensure you sitting in the centre of the chair and aligned with the monitor / keyboard 	No
Is your keyboard set up some distance from the edge of the desk?	Reaching out in front to use the keyboard will cause undue strain on the arms, shoulders and neck over time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the keyboard close to the body near the edge of the desk 	Yes
Does your mouse 'creep' away from you as you work?	'Mouse creep' is a common problem with all mouse actions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the mouse close to keyboard to reduce strain on the shoulder, neck and arm muscles 	No

Ergonomic Workstation Self-Assessment Tool

Guide

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Workstation	Action	Action Details /
Does your keyboard move out of parallel with the edge of the desk over time?	This is a tell-tale sign that you are not lined up symmetrically with your workstation. The most common fault is that the screen is slightly offset to your line of vision and you are rotating slightly to accommodate this position; hence the keyboard will slowly adapt to the rotated position. Ensure you are aligned to the centre of the monitor.	No
Are you an experienced touch typist?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are at less risk of forearm or wrist pain if you are an experienced keyboardist If your technique is good, look at the position of your body or the length of time between breaks as a possible factor for your discomfort 	Wouldn't say experienced but I am good at it.
Are you a pick and peck keyboardist?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are more at risk of discomfort if your typing technique is not good due to overuse of some parts of our body Improve your typing/ keyboarding skills - many free programs are available online 	What is that?
Do you rest your wrists/ lower forearms on the edge of the desk when you are keyboarding?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check the edge of the desk to ensure you not creating a pressure area that might be causing discomfort You may benefit from a padded or gel wrist support that lies in front of the keyboard 	Yes
Does your desk have a rounded or sharp edge?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check your workstation setup, especially keyboard and chair / desk heights Desks with rounded edges are more comfortable and less likely to create pressure areas on the lower forearm or wrist areas If there are hard edges, gel pads may assist 	Sharp
Do you experience pain while mousing?	<p>The shapes of the mouse, the position of the mouse whilst in use and the frequency and duration of mouse use, are all key factors that may contribute to discomfort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to pinpoint where the discomfort is and what movement or position tends to aggravate the discomfort – this will assist in identifying a solution A vertical mouse places the hand/arm/shoulder in a neutral position which may assist in some high mouse use situations A larger mouse can reduce the grip needed (for a larger hand) and therefore reduce the tension in the forearm Better mouse technique / lower frequency and duration of mouse use may assist 	No and No
Is your mouse small compared to the size of your hand?		
Do you find your symptoms are aggravated by using your mouse?		I have arthritis in two places in my wrist joints. Any pain I have in inevitable

Ergonomic Workstation Self-Assessment Tool

Guide

General fatigue, loss of concentration, leg and back discomfort – these generalised symptoms can be difficult to determine a specific cause, and may include a number of complaints and areas of the body. There are usually multiple contributing factors, however if the basics are addressed, the issues are often resolved. If you are experiencing fatigue, loss of concentration leg or back discomfort at work, please complete the following self-assessment tool.

Workstation	Action	Action Details /
Do you use keyboard short cuts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning keyboard shortcuts can significantly reduce mouse use, duration and frequency thus reducing discomfort Several Keyboard Shortcut Documents can be found on Microsoft Office sites 	Sometimes
Do you stop every 45 minutes for a small posture break?	A brief posture pause approximately every 45 minutes, involving a stand up, stretch and a short walk can help reduce many causes of discomfort; and is good for the body and for the brain.	Yes
Do you stop every 45 minutes for a small posture break?	A brief posture pause approximately every 45 minutes, involving a stand up, stretch and a short walk can help reduce many causes of discomfort; and is good for the body and for the brain.	
Does your chair feel too high or too low to work comfortably?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move adjusted chair to desk; adjust chair height to desk in order to work comfortably; you may need to use a footrest. If you can't lower the chair enough for the desk further intervention may be needed 	Yes
Do your elbows sit comfortably at desk height?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure you are sitting with your bottom well back against the back of the chair and in a supported posture – now you may assess your shoulder and elbow position The shoulders should feel relaxed and the elbows sit comfortably between 90° and 110° while working at the desk 	No
Do you use a 'corner station'?	The body finds it difficult to align itself to curves, often resulting in the body and /or neck being rotated whilst working (A triangular insert into the corner may help). Corner Stations can and should be removed (with the use of flat screens).	Yes
Does your desk have a rounded or sharp edge?	Check your workstation setup, especially keyboard and chair / desk heights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check your workstation setup, especially keyboard and chair / desk heights Desks with rounded edges are more comfortable and less likely to create pressure areas on the lower forearm or wrist areas If there are hard edges, a gel pads may assist 	Sharp I think
Does your chair have arms which do not allow you to get close to the desk?	Chair arms can impede getting close to your work, causing you to slump or lean forward. Over time this can cause neck, shoulder, back and /or arm strain. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove and or adjust / shorten / swing / lower arms, to get the chair close to the desk to allow comfortable work position 	Yes depending on height

Ergonomic Workstation Self-Assessment Tool

Guide

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Is your chair aligned directly in front of the centre of your monitor?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure your body position is symmetrical to avoid subtle body strains over time Ensure your chair is in line with the centre of your monitor 	Yes
Does your chair have enough adjustments to get comfortable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reassess your chair set up - know your chair's capabilities 	No
Does your chair have an adjustable lumbar support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairs will have a combination of depth, density, height and or level lumbar support adjustments - know your chair's capabilities 	No
Is this set up to support your low back?	Adjust the height of the lumbar support to fit into the deepest part of the back's curve while sitting into the chair	No
Is the monitor screen more than or less than an arm's length from you while sitting in your chair?	The normal eye focal length for your monitor is the length of the arm from the body to the finger tip. If you have a non-standard monitor size, you may need to adjust accordingly. If you are wearing bifocals or strong glasses, you may need to adjust – if you are having difficulty, ask your optometrist what the focal length is for your glasses.	No
Do your calves ache during sitting actions?	Interrupted or poor circulation in the lower legs can contribute to aggravation of pre-existing varicose veins and other leg circulatory problems. Getting up and walking, taking the stairs, regular change of postures, intermittent standing and stretching can assist.	Yes, due to the arthritis in my lower back