

Office Ergonomic Guidance

The Office of Congressional Workplace Rights (OCWR) is committed to minimizing musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) throughout the legislative branch. The guidelines below include the basic elements for establishing an ergonomically sound office environment. Some employing offices may already have ergonomic programs, and this guidance is not intended to replace those programs, but it may offer supplemental information.

1

MONITOR

- Eye level is approximately 2 to 3 inches below the top of the monitor
- Monitor is approximately an arm's length away
- Eyes are looking slightly downward without bending the neck
- Monitor is centered in relation to the body's position

MONITOR GLARE

- Adjust monitor to obtain a 10–20 degree tilt to reduce glare
- Adjust lighting to reduce glare
- Adjust monitor display setting
- Clean monitor screen



2

CHAIR HEIGHT & ADJUSTMENTS

- Chair slightly reclined at 100 to 110 degrees with lumbar support
- Knees are level with hips
- Hips and knees are at 90 degrees
- Thighs are parallel to the floor
- Elbows are at sides and bent at 90 degrees or more
- Forearms are horizontal
- Adjust armrests to elbow height
- Wrists are in a neutral (straight) posture, in line with forearms
- Adjust chair so pressure is not placed behind the knees
- Feet are flat on the floor or resting on a footrest

3

INPUT DEVICES: KEYBOARD & MOUSE

- Keyboard should be directly in front of monitor
- The G and H buttons on the keyboard are aligned with your nose
- Keyboard in a flat position
- Mouse adjacent to keyboard
- Keyboard and mouse on the same working level
- Use external keyboard and mouse with laptop

4

STANDING DESK HEIGHT

- Adjust desk so elbows are at sides and bent at 90 degrees or more
- Adjust desk so forearms are horizontal
- Adjust position so wrists are in a neutral (straight) posture, in line with forearms
- Consider standing on an anti-fatigue cushion mat



OTHER ERGONOMIC ELEMENTS

BODY POSITION

- Head and neck are upright and over shoulders
- Shoulders are relaxed, not raised or tense
- Ears, shoulders, elbows, and hips are aligned

OFFICE ITEMS

- Document holder should be adjacent to and at the same height as monitor
- Telephone and other frequently used equipment are easily accessible
- Headset or headphones are used for extended phone use

LIGHTING

- Ensure adequate lighting in the workspace
- Consider a task light on an adjustable arm rather than a table lamp

SCHEDULE BREAKS

- Stand up from desk and walk around for a few minutes
- If able, do basic body stretches*
- Look away from the monitor and focus on something at a different distance

ERGONOMICALLY DESIGNED OFFICE SPACES PROVIDE MANY ADVANTAGES FOR BOTH EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS, INCLUDING:

- Increasing employee focus, attention, and engagement
- Enhancing productivity and work quality
- Improving employee morale, mood, and energy level
- Reducing employee stress
- Lowering the risk of developing musculoskeletal disorders
- Minimizing business costs associated with employee injuries and absenteeism

HERE ARE SEVERAL BASIC STRETCHES THAT CAN BE COMPLETED AT YOUR WORKSTATION:*



CABLE STRETCH

While sitting with chin in, stomach in, shoulders relaxed, hands relaxed in lap, and feet flat on the floor, imagine a cable pulling your head upward. Hold for 3 seconds and relax. Repeat 3 times.



NECK STRETCH

Tilt head to one side (ear toward shoulder). Hold for 15 seconds. Relax. Repeat 3 times on each side.



DIAGONAL NECK STRETCH

Turn head slightly and then look down as if looking in your pocket. Hold for 15 seconds. Relax. Repeat 3 times on each side.



SHOULDER SHRUG

Slowly bring shoulders up to the ears and hold for approximately 3 seconds. Rotate shoulders back and down. Repeat 10 times.



WRIST STRETCH

Hold arm straight out in front of you. Pull the hand backwards with the other hand, then pull downward. Hold for 20 seconds. Relax. Repeat 3 times each.

Source: <https://www.ors.od.nih.gov/sr/dohs/HealthAndWellness/Ergonomics/Pages/exercises.aspx>

The OCWR Ergonomic Outreach Program is here to provide guidance and supplemental information to your employer's program. OCWR provides an Ergonomic Self-Evaluation, which can be accessed on our website at <https://www.ocwr.gov>. You can also request that the OCWR conduct an on-site evaluation by submitting a **Request for Ergonomic Evaluation**, which can also be found on our website.

*Exercises are recommended for healthy adults and should not lead to any pain or discomfort. Exercises and stretches are based on an individual's abilities and limitations. It is recommended that you consult with a physician before starting a new exercise regimen.

