



SAFETY ADVISOR

FEBRUARY 2024

Reducing Workplace Ergonomic Injuries in 2024

By Keith Myhre

Central Office, FDOT Occupational Safety and Health Programs

Ergonomics in an office environment will involve a consistent group of players: the chair, desk, keyboard, mouse, monitor, and telephone. A consistent group of problem areas: neck, shoulders, elbows, wrists, and fingers. A consistent group of remedies: equipment spacing, posture, and chair height. In the end, you can perform your work comfortably.

Chair: Your chair should support your spine and be adjustable so that your feet rest flat on the floor and your thighs are parallel to the floor. Feet should not be folded back under your chair. If armrests adjust, they should be positioned low enough that your shoulders are not propped up with elbows remaining close to the body. If your chair cannot be lowered enough, use a footrest to keep your feet flat.

Desk: Your desk must have enough room for your legs and feet. Avoid storage of items under your desk, which compromises your foot position. *(cont.)*

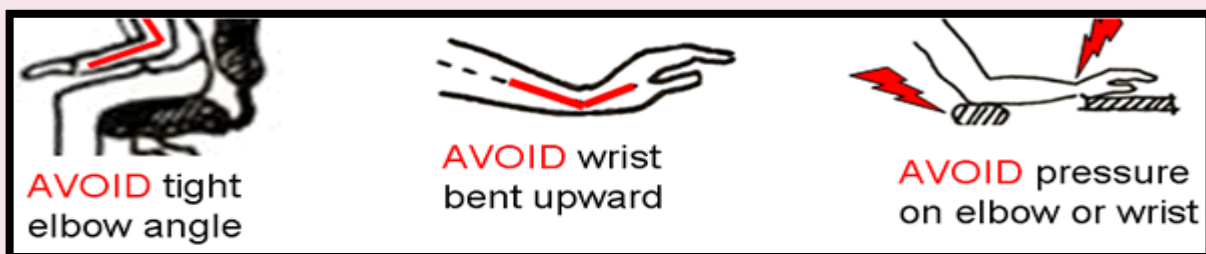


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Desks (cont.): Finding ways to adjust oversized or undersized desks may be challenging, so start with adjusting your chair first. Desk edges that are hard and unrounded can present problems for your wrist. Pad the edge of the desk you face while sitting. Or consider using a wrist rest. This will protect your wrists from contact stress—a problem resulting from prolonged contact with hard edges.

Keyboard and Mouse: Your keyboard and mouse should be within easy reach from your chair, with hands straight in front of you and slightly below your elbows. Avoid awkward angles with wrists and elbows. Position your hands, elbows and shoulders straight in line with each other. Relaxing is the key for shoulders while using a keyboard and mouse. The edge of your desk or the keyboard should never support your wrists. When typing, watch your wrists. They should not bend outward, inward or downward. Wrists should remain straight and level with your hands. Consider using an ergonomic keyboard.

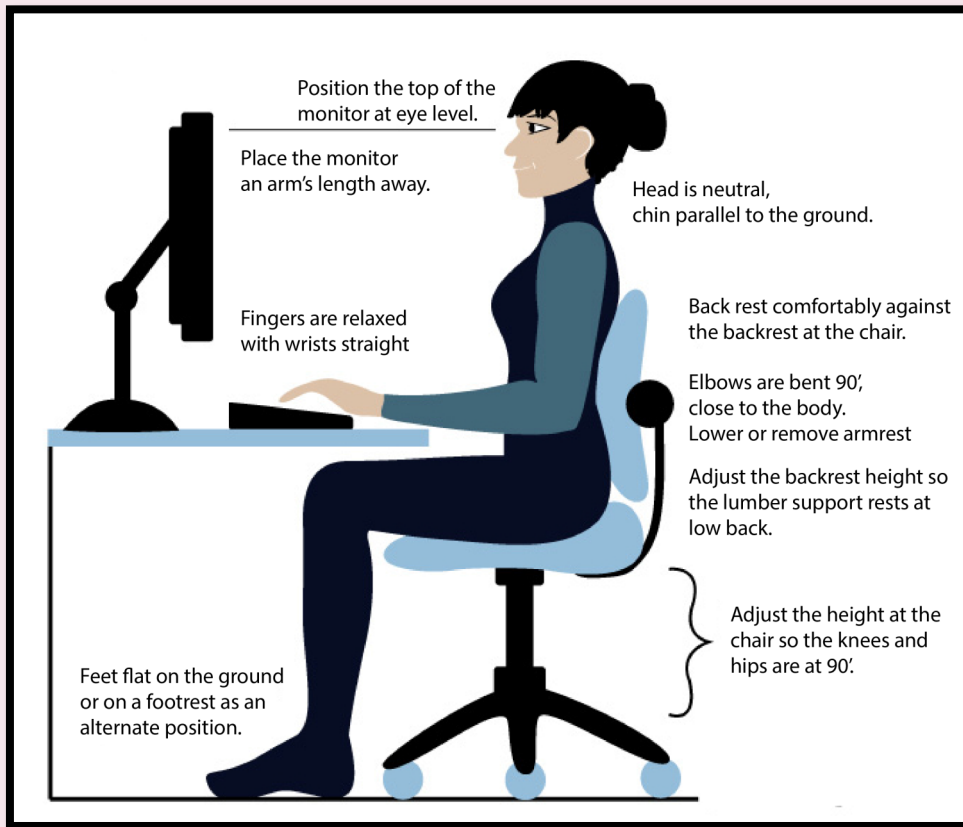


Monitor: A monitor should be positioned straight in front of you and directly behind the keyboard, about an arm's length away from your face. For the most comfortable viewing, the monitor should be no closer than approximately 20 inches from your face, with the top of the screen at eye level.

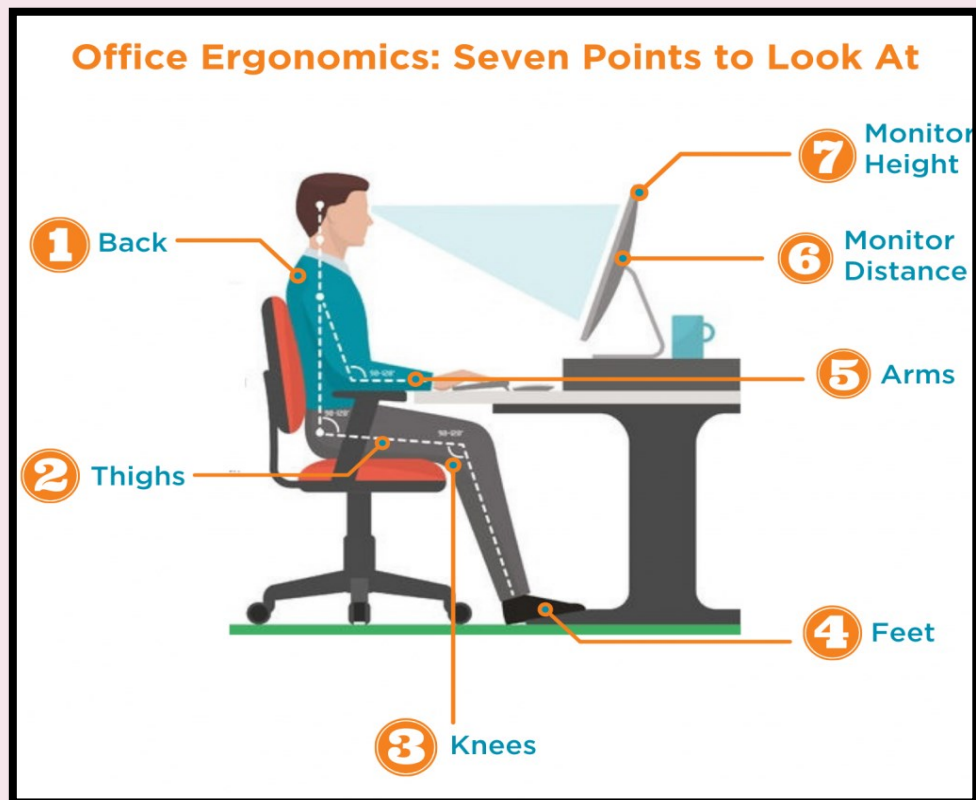
Laptops: Excessive laptop use may lead to discomfort due to the low screen height, cramped keyboard and small touchpad. When using a laptop for an extended time, consider using an external keyboard and mouse with the laptop elevated to face level.

Phone: Frequent cradling of a phone between the neck and shoulder or long periods on the phone can lead to neck and shoulder discomfort. Consider using a speaker phone as much as possible to avoid avoidable long-term injuries.

Information sources: The Mayo Clinic



Check your eyes, neck, back, shoulders, elbows, wrists, then your thighs and feet. How do you look?





SHOW LOVE BEHIND THE WHEEL



THIS VALENTINE'S DAY



Set phone on "Do not Disturb".



Show compassion to yourself and others.



Preset your romantic playlist.



Leave earlier to avoid being late.



Give fellow drivers the benefit of the doubt.



Focus on getting to the ones you love.



HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

LET'S GET EVERYONE HOME SAFELY THIS VALENTINE'S DAY



TargetZeroFL.com



Hazard Surveys

By Keith Myhre

Central Office, FDOT Occupational Safety and Health Programs

When you refer to the FDOT Safety and Loss Prevention Manual (soon to be re-named *“Occupational Safety and Health Manual,”*) you’ll find a chapter addressing safety inspections (a/k/a hazard surveys). This chapter discusses the importance and purpose of conducting periodic surveys for workplace hazards, thereby minimizing hazards and risks and hopefully identifying unsafe work practices. Surveys are to be conducted on a frequent basis. This is an agreed-upon time, which may be weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually, based on the predetermined need and frequency of the survey. For consistency, a checklist with the specific items or areas to inspect must be listed and available to anyone conducting the survey. A hazard survey should have a predetermined subject matter for review, with a conclusion on the findings. These should be kept for a future reference source.



When conducting hazard surveys, one is not always looking for the obvious hazards, such as a leaking chemical container. You are focusing on what hazards may occur if lighting is not replaced, vehicle maintenance is not completed, or machinery has not been maintained. The focus is on avoiding potential hazards due to your watchful eyes and diligent efforts. If your area of responsibility becomes too broad, making you feel ineffective in quality surveys, then break down your surveys into more focused and attainable areas. While it may sometimes seem long and tedious, your efforts are reducing the risks of injuries or damage to equipment. Keep up the good work!

Did You Know?

Somewhere within your work area you should see a first aid kit!

We can get complacent to the objects hanging on our workplace walls, but a first aid kit should be similar to a fire extinguisher. Always ready to serve. It is there for others to use in helping YOU! It is there for YOU to use in assisting others! It is the responsibility of Support Services to inspect AND maintain the kits. First aid kit supplies should match the types of injuries expected in each location. For office areas, these can be very standard in content. FDOT has vastly differing areas of work. Some kits may need supplies to address chemical exposure, burns, insect stings or eye injury. A key component for infection control is to have disposable gloves within a first aid kit. Thereby minimizing risk for those rendering assistance. Can you provide first aid assistance? ***Look for classes provided in your district and sign up!***



The Safety Advisor is distributed electronically to all FDOT staff monthly to promote indoor and outdoor workplace safety and generate an overall awareness of safety in our lives. It is produced monthly by the State Safety Office in Tallahassee, Florida.

For content information or ideas, please email Keith Myhre
Keith.Myhre@dot.state.fl.us

See Department safety information at: <https://www.fdot.gov/safety>
Anonymously report hazards in your workplace: (850) 414-5255

