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# Get the Right Fit at Work

## The Basics of Workplace Ergonomics

Many of our daily tasks—lifting, reaching and pushing—make us vulnerable to repetitive stress injuries. But, by following the principles of ergonomics, you may be able to avoid discomfort. Ergonomics is the science of fitting the job to the worker—making sure your environment fits you and the tasks you do.

### *Here are some basic principles of ergonomics:*

- **Keep your spine in a neutral position.** Avoid bending or hunching over. Sit up straight in a chair that offers lumbar support. When standing, keep one foot up on a footrest to keep your spine in line.
- **Place everything within easy reach.** You may not notice it, but every time you have to reach for something, you place unnecessary strain on your muscles. Check your workspace—keep the things you use most often within reach of your forearms.
- **Minimize contact stress.** Use tools with cushioned grips. Sit and stand on cushioned surfaces. The back of your knee is another common pressure point—make sure your chair is at the right height for you. Your feet should rest firmly on the floor with the angle between your thighs and lower legs 90 degrees or more.
- **Change your position often.** Take periodic breaks to move, exercise and stretch. Try to adjust your positions and tasks throughout the day. If possible, alternate between standing and sitting.
- **Above all, be comfortable.** Take notice of anything that brings discomfort and try to eliminate it. Organize your tasks and your environment to maximize comfort and minimize injuries.

### *Some other helpful tips:*

#### **When lifting:**

- Try to minimize the amount of weight you're lifting at any one time.
- Stand close to what you're lifting.
- Bend at the knees, not the waist.
- Tighten your stomach muscles.
- Keep your back straight; lift with your legs.

#### **At your computer:**

- Position your monitor at arm's length. The top of the screen should be at eye level or below so that you look down slightly.
- Put your keyboard directly in front of your monitor. Keep your wrists level when typing or using your mouse.
- Eliminate glare. Shut blinds, or place light sources to the side of the computer screen.
- Reduce eyestrain by taking frequent breaks. Every 10 minutes, focus—for at least 10 seconds—on an object several feet away.
- Don't forget to blink. Studies show that people only blink once a minute when doing computer work (once every five seconds is normal).

**You can call Nurse Line for many health-related issues. Nurses are available 24 hours every day.**

**1-866-243-1238**

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at 1-800-855-2880 and ask for 1-866-243-1238.