

Ergonomic Workstation Guidelines

The goal of any workstation is to have the employee working in the best ergonomic setup as possible. To be ergonomically correct does not always mean to be as comfortable as you can be.

A proper workstation will be ergonomically correct and still be comfortable for the employee. There is no perfect set up that will meet the needs of all employees. This is a very individualized process. A proper ergonomic workstation will have all the needed equipment, which in some cases does not match up with the equipment that may be wanted by an employee.

Here are some helpful guidelines to follow when reviewing a workstation to ensure it is set up as ergonomically correct as possible.

- Review the job duties taking place in the workstation. Concentrate on the length of time each task takes and how repetitive each job may be; including what effect that can have on each part of the body.
 - Ensure as many parts of the body are being supported as possible by either a chair, a pad, a desk or the ground. Some examples include:
 - Feet always on the ground or on a foot stool.
 - Forearms always on the chair's armrest.
 - Using keyboard and mouse pads for the wrists.
 - Sitting all the way back in your chair to ensure back support from your chair's back rest. The more body parts being supported, the less your own body must support them.
- If there is a specific issue with an employee and their workstation, ask mainly open-ended questions to try and get to the root cause of the issue. The root cause may or may not have anything to do with the workstation set up itself. Also ask questions about any activities outside of work that maybe causing the same type of discomforts that may be occurring at the workstation.
- Any type of repetitive motion for more than 50 to 60 minutes straight could start to cause pain. Ensure employees take a 2-5-minute break to move out of your position and stop what you are doing, if it has been over 50 minutes of continuous activity.
- When looking to purchase needed office ergonomic equipment, keep in mind there are many different options at many different price levels. The most expensive equipment may not always be the best to meet the employee's needs. Being ergonomically correct and practical comes before comfort.
- Any changes to a workstation should be implemented for a minimum of 3 to 4 weeks before any additional changes are attempted. This time is needed to give the body a chance to get used to the new muscles being used daily. There may be some additional discomfort during this time period that will get better with time.