

<b>Title: SETTING UP YOUR WORKSTATION-CHECKLIST</b>		
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The following checklist is a step-by-step approach designed to be used when employees are located at a new workstation or whenever their tasks are changed to minimize the risk of a musculoskeletal disorder. While working at the computer it is also important to take regular breaks. Frequent short breaks should be taken for at least 5 minutes of every hour doing non computer related tasks. Meal breaks or rest periods should also be taken away from the computer.

If you cannot make the adjustment required to ensure your workstation is ergonomically set up, discuss with the Health and Safety Officer what alterations need to be made or ergonomic equipment purchased. For further advice, contact Caroline Duffy, on Ext. 4914.

## 1. CHAIR

The chair is the first piece of your workstation equipment that should be adjusted.

Refer to any instructions that are provided with the chair or have someone show you how to adjust the chair controls.

### 1.1 SEAT

*Adjusted as per  
the guidelines  
-mark Y/N*

#### Height

Adjust the chair height so the feet are comfortably flat on the floor, the thighs are approximately horizontal and the lower legs approximately vertical (there should be minimal pressure on the underside of your thighs). The key is to not only have your feet flat on the floor (or supported by a foot rest) but also to have your thighs parallel with the seat pan so your legs form approximately a 90 degree (or greater) angle at the knees.

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#### Tilt

If your chair is able to tilt, initially set it horizontal and you may wish to tilt it slightly forward to improve comfort.

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### 1.2 BACK SUPPORT

#### Height

The back rest should fit the curve of the lower back. It is important the back rest is not placed too low. Start by setting the height of the back rest to its maximum height. If it is not comfortable, lower the height by several centimeters and try the position. Repeat until the most comfortable position is found.

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#### Forward/ Backward position

The back rest should place a comfortable pressure on the lower back while seated in the usual working posture. It should not feel like it pushes you out of the seat or that you have to lean back too far to reach in. You should adjust the back angle of your chair so your trunk and upper legs form an angle somewhere between 94 -115 degrees.

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Adjusted as  
per the  
guidelines  
-mark Y/N

### 1.3 ARM RESTS

- Arm rests are not recommended for computer based tasks unless they are well out of the way of the desk. In addition, when you assume the typing position with your arms resting comfortably at your side, the chair arms should be at a height where they just barely contact your elbows.
- If your chair does have arm rests, make sure they do not prevent you from getting as close to the desk as you require, impinge your elbows when working and that you do not lean down on them while typing. If your chair does have arm rests, remove them or replace them with a smaller or adjustable option.

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## 2. DESKS

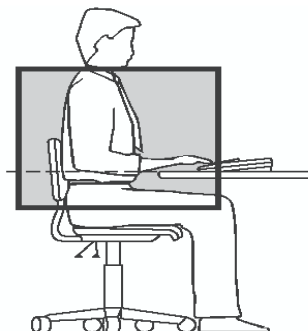
After adjusting your chair to suit your body size other adjustments can be undertaken starting with ensuring you are sitting at your desk correctly.

The instructions for the non-adjustable desk should be followed.

### 2.1 NON HEIGHT ADJUSTABLE DESK

If the chair has been adjusted and the desk is higher or lower than the elbow, other forms of adjustment will be required.

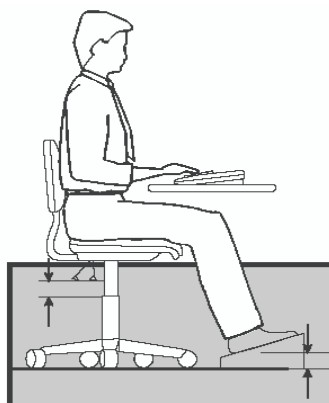
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-mark Y/N



*Desired sitting position at your desk*

#### Desk too high

- The height of the chair will need to be increased.
- Raise the chair and use a footrest to ensure that your thighs are approximately horizontal and the lower legs approximately vertical and feet are on a flat surface.

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*Increase the height of the chair and use a footrest if the desk is too high*

#### Desk too low

- If the desk cannot be modified to the correct height, a new ergonomic desk will be required.

### 2.3 UNDER DESK CLEARANCE

- The space under the desk should be kept as clear as possible.
- Computer hard drives, boxes, files, bins and mobile draw units if stored under the desk can interfere with leg space and force you to adopt an awkward or twisted posture.

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## 3. COMPUTER SET UP

The set up of the computer should be considered following the correct positioning of the desk and chair.

### 3.1 KEYBOARD

#### Angle

- The wrists should remain in a neutral position when typing.
- Tilt the keyboard, using the feet at the back, to find your ideal position. The common setting is where the feet are lowered so the keyboard sits flat on the desk.

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#### Position on desk

- The keyboard should be as close to the front of the desk as possible.
- Do not place documents between the keyboard and the front edge of the desk when typing.
- Ensure there is room to put the keyboard to one side when it is not in use.

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#### Use

- When keyboarding, upper arms and elbows should be close to the body with forearms, wrists and hands held straight in a neutral position (the forearms should be at 90 degrees to the upper arm).

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### 3.2 MOUSE

#### Position on the desk

- The mouse pad should be placed as close to the keyboard as possible and at the same height as the keyboard to minimize over-reaching action.
- If you use the mouse frequently, consider learning to use it with both the left and right hand to improve comfort (place on left and right hand side of the keyboard).

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#### Use

- Hold the mouse loosely, keeping your wrist relaxed and neutral, not bent.
- Use your whole arm and shoulder to move the mouse, not just your wrist.
- A gel wrist rest mouse pad can be used if pain is experienced in the wrist and forearm.

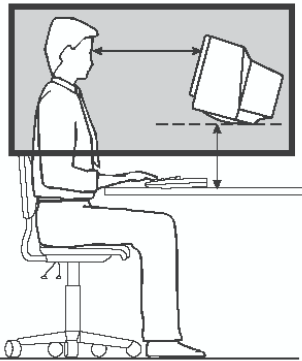
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### 3.3 VISUAL DISPLAY UNIT (VDU)

#### Height

- The screen should be positioned so that the top of the screen is level with, or slightly lower than your eyes, when you are sitting upright.
- If the screen is not high enough, phone books can raise the height temporarily. An adjustable platform to position the monitor on should be purchased as a permanent measure.
- If the screen is too high and if it is resting on the computer hard drive, remove the hard drive and position the monitor on the desk.
- If you wear bi-focal glasses, ensure the monitor position does not cause you to bend your neck.

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*Desired position of screen*

#### **Distance from eye**

- The screen should be approximately an arms length away from your usual seated position at the workstation.
- Trial this position and move further away or closer as required.

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#### **Positioning the screen**

- The screen should be placed in front of you to avoid glare or reflections from windows and overhead lights. A glare guard can be used to minimize the glare on the screen if the screen cannot be repositioned.
- In most cases the screen should be directly in front of you unless you are doing continuous data entry and the source document is observed more than, or the same amount as, the screen. In this circumstance, the document holder should be placed directly in front of you and screen slightly to the side OR the document holder in a similar position to the screen where it is slightly to one side and you look evenly between the two.

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## **4. OTHER DESKTOP ACCESSORIES**

### **4.1 DOCUMENT HOLDER**

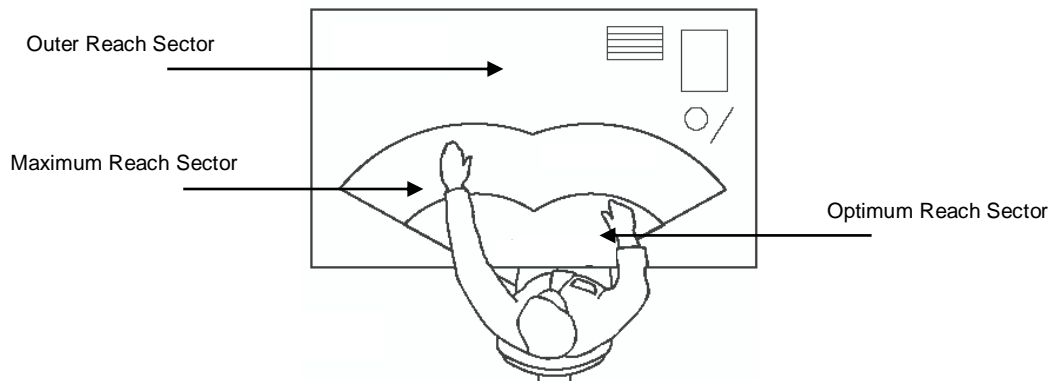
- Reading documents resting on the surface of the desk for prolonged periods may cause neck and shoulder strains through the adoption of poor posture.
- The need for a document holder depends on the type of work you undertake. If your work does not involve referring to reference material or data entry a document holder is probably not necessary.
- There are two major types of document holders that can be used depending on the work that you are doing, the 'A-frame' or 'swivel arm' holders.
- An A-frame holder rests on the desk and can be set at different angles. It can be positioned between the screen and keyboard and is often used to position heavier reference material.
- A swivel-arm holder suspends the document above the desk and should be adjusted to be next to the screen so that it is the same visual distance from the usual and the same height as the screen. It is ideal for work involving data entry or transcribing documents.

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### **4.2 OTHER DESKTOP ITEMS**

- High use desktop items should be placed in the optimum to maximum reach sector (see diagram below) to ensure that excessive reaching or stretching is avoided.

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*Workspace layout guidelines*

### 4.3 TELEPHONE

- The telephone should be positioned within, or at the limit of, the Optimum Reach Sector, depending on the amount of use. You should not have to bend your trunk to grasp the handset.
- Place the phone on either the left or right hand side accordingly to personal comfort. If you are making a lot of calls, it is best to place the telephone on the same side as the dominant hand. If you are mostly receiving calls, it may be more comfortable to place the phone on the non-dominant side.
- If you frequently type/ write while on the phone, you should consider the use of a headset to keep both hands free.
- Ensure that you hold the phone with your hand and do not rest it on your shoulder and bend your neck awkwardly.



### 4.4 IN TRAY

- In trays should be positioned in the Outer Reach Sector and should not be above shoulder height (when seated).



### 4.5 STATIONERY

- Stationery should be stored in the Outer Reach Sector or in the top desk draw.

### 4.6 REFERENCE BOOKS AND FOLDERS

- Large or heavy reference books or folders if used regularly should be stored within close reach or in a nearby position where you have to stand to access them.
- Such items should not be handled at the limit of your reach when seated, as this will increase the risk of an injury.



