Train the Trainer Reference Material for Computer Workstation Self Evaluation

The following reference material is for use by the department trainer in assisting employees with their Computer Workstation Self Evaluation. Reference material for each item is in italics. For further information or clarification on any item, please contact the UCDHS Ergonomics Program.

Computer Workstation Self Evaluation

Assessment Date: ______________
Employee Name: _________________________ Employee ID#: ____________________
Department: _____________________________ Supervisor: _______________________
Union Affiliation: _________________________ Date of Hire (if New Hire): __________
Reason for Assessment (circle any that apply):
New Employee Transfer to new workstation Equipment Request Discomfort Routine Check

New employees and those transferring to a new workstation that are covered under the CUE contract are required to complete a workstation assessment, as stated under Article 8, Health & Safety, section B, within 90 calendar days of working at that workstation. This checklist serves as documentation of the assessment and corrections that were made. Maintain the completed checklist in the employee department file and forward a copy to the UCDHS Ergonomics Program. Include Date of Hire for new hires.

For employees requesting equipment, please assure a work station assessment has been completed and discuss with the employee how the requested equipment will assist them. Often, equipment is requested that is not needed and sometimes not indicated if workstation position and habits are addressed. If in doubt whether equipment will be helpful, contact the Ergonomics Program for advise at 734-6180.

Immediate review of workstation position and habits is essential for employees experiencing discomfort. If discomfort is not improved 5-7 days following work station/work habit changes, if together you are unable to determine appropriate changes, OR if the employee expresses dissatisfaction with changes, contact the Ergonomics Program for advice at 734-6180.

Routine checks of the workstation and work habits help reinforce healthy positions and work habits. It also provides an opportunity for the employee to review any new information that is available.

Provide the employee with the following documents to refer to when assessing their workstations.
1. Adjusting Your Computer Workstation to Fit
2. Common Workstation and Work Habit Recommendations

Review with the employee any questions to which they had answered “NO” to determine corrections. If you are unable to determine corrections, contact the Ergonomics Program for advise.
Seated Position
Do you know how to adjust your chair?
Instructions for how to adjust the standard issue Steelcase Criterion chair are located at the back of this document or can be accessed on the Steelcase website, www.steelcase.com
Employees should know how to make the following chair adjustments:
1. Seat height
2. Seat depth (if available)
3. Seat back height
4. Seat back tension
5. Chair arm height

Is your chair adjusted for support & comfort?
Assure the following:
1. Pressure is evenly distributed along back of thighs and buttock. Adjust through seat pan depth (if available) and seat height. There should be 2-3 fingers of space between the back of the knee and the seat pan.
2. Lower back support is felt just below the beltline. Adjust seat back height as needed.
3. Employee feels stable in the chair (does not feel they are sliding out of the chair). Adjust seat pan tilt to level.

Are your feet firmly supported by the floor or a footstool? When sitting back in the chair and when the chair height is adjusted as needed for proper arm position (see below), the employee’s feet should firmly contact the floor with thighs level or slightly down sloping (hips level or slightly higher than knees). If the feet do not firmly contact the floor or the thighs are severely downsloping, a footstool should be provided. Use of a footstool that results in the knees being higher than the hips should be avoided.

Arm Position when using the computer
Are shoulders relaxed? If seated too low relative to the keyboard or mouse, the employee may shrug their shoulders to raise their arms, increasing tension of the neck and shoulders. Either raise the chair or lower the keyboard. Encourage the employee to allow the shoulders to relax. Periodically shrugging the shoulders up then fully relaxing them down helps employees learn a relaxed position.

Are elbows next to your sides, not reaching forward? Assure elbows remain at sides when typing and using the mouse. Elbows forward of the body can be corrected by 1. Moving the keyboard closer either on the keyboard tray or on the work surface 2. Having the employee move in closer to the keyboard. Realize the employee may be trying to maintain a certain distance from the monitor. Moving the monitor further away may make it more comfortable for the employee to remain closer to the keyboard.

Keeping elbows at sides is important to allow employees to sit more erect and reduce tension of the neck, shoulders, and upper back. It also promotes improved wrist habits since it is less likely the employee will rest their wrists down when typing or using the mouse.

Is the keyboard at your seated elbow height? If viewed from the side, the bottom of the elbow should be at or slightly above keyboard height. Correct through chair height or keyboard tray adjustments.
Is the mouse or trackball at the same height and next to the keyboard? This is a common problem when there is not enough space on a keyboard tray for the mouse or trackball. Solutions include upgrading the keyboard tray to one that can house both the keyboard and mouse/trackball or changing out the keyboard for one that has the input device built into the keyboard. Mice tend to wander. Encourage employees to keep their mouse or trackball close to the keyboard and forward on the work surface or keyboard tray.

Are wrists straight (not bent up/down/or side to side) when typing?

If elbow position and height relative to the keyboard are correct, wrists should be straight. Recheck elbow position if wrists are not straight.

Keyboard below Elbow Height, Wrists bent up – Incorrect

Assure legs on keyboard are in down position to avoid backward bending of wrists.

Keyboard legs up-Wrists bent down – Incorrect

Keyboard legs up-Wrists straight - Correct

Are wrists straight (not bent up/down/or side to side) when using the mouse or trackball?

First, assure proper elbow position and mouse/trackball placement are as noted above. Some mouse/trackball designs force the wrist into improper positions and may require a different input devise.

Mouse below Elbow Height
Wrist Bent Up - Incorrect

Mouse Elbow Height, Wrist Straight – Correct
**Head Position**

Is your head upright and straight (not severely bent or turned) when viewing the monitor?

For non-bifocal users, the top of the screen should be about eye level. Bifocal users (including those with blended lenses) typically need the monitor lower since they look out of the lower portion of their lenses. If the monitor cannot be lowered, the employee may need to raise the chair. Keyboard and mouse height will then need to be readjusted for proper arm position.

**Bifocal User-Monitor Too High – Incorrect**

Upright Head Position – Correct

Assure glare is not affecting the employee’s head position. Refer to the section on glare in the document “Common workstation and work habit recommendation”. The keyboard and monitor should be aligned so the neck is not turned when viewing the monitor. This can be problematic for workstations having the keyboard and an oversized monitor on a narrow work surface. Addition of a keyboard tray or changing to a flat screen monitor typically solves this problem.

Is your head upright and straight (not severely bent or turned) when looking at documents or copy? Placing copy or documents on an inclined surface using a copy holder improves head position when reading and writing. It is not uncommon to have the employee working from optimal positions when typing only to have them bend their neck to the side and down to view copy. This is easily corrected with a copy holder or even a 3-ring binder notebook to place copy or documents on an incline.

**Copy on Desk, Head Down – Incorrect**

**Copy Inclined, Upright Head Position - Correct**

Is your head upright when on the phone? Trapping the phone between the ear and shoulder should be avoided. Instead, the phone should be held with one hand. If both hands must be free for other tasks (e.g. computer look up), use of a headset or speaker phone is recommended. The need for a headset should be reviewed with the supervisor.

Are frequently used items close? Common items include the phone and reference materials. Avoid storing frequently used items in overhead bins that are within reach of the seated work station. Employees typically will reach for items without standing, placing their shoulder at risk of injury. Instead, locate these items on the work surface or out of seated reach so that standing is required.
**Work Habits**

Do you reduce repetitive typing and mouse use through use of macros, shortcut keys, arrow keys? Consider providing training on how to reduce repetitive hand movements while improving efficiency for the types of tasks performed within your department. Further information about macros and shortcut keys can be found on the “help” screen for most programs.

Do you take short microbreaks away from the computer throughout the day? *Microbreaks are 15-30 second breaks from computer use and should be encouraged to interrupt sustained postures common with computer work. Simply standing from sitting ever 30-45 minutes allows the body a change in position, serving as a microbreak. Incorporating stretching during microbreaks is also helpful.*

Have you received, reviewed, and do you understand how each of the following documents applies to your Workstation and work habits? *Both documents should be provided to the employee as reference materials for their self-evaluation.*

Adjusting Your Computer Workstation to Fit

Common Workstation and Work Habit Recommendations

**Review with your supervisor or department safety coordinator any items to which you answered “NO”.* Please review “NO” items with the employee. If you are unable to identify or agree on a given correction, contact the Ergonomics Program for assistance.

**For further assistance contact the Ergonomics Program at 734-6180.**
Tilt tension
Turn knob toward left side of chair to increase tension.

Height-width pivot-arms*
Squeeze trigger to raise or lower armrest. Grasp arm caps to slide width in/out and to pivot.

Seat angle
Lift paddle and shift your weight to tilt seat forward or back.

Seat depth*
Lift paddle and slide seat forward or back.

Seat height
Lift paddle to raise or lower seat height.

Back height
While seated, pull handle toward you and raise or lower. (You may need your other hand to help move backrest.)

Variable back stop
Hold switch forward while you lean back. Release to set maximum recline angle. To restore full tilt, release switch when fully reclined.

Foot ring height* (stool only)
Lift ring and rotate counterclockwise, raise or lower, then turn clockwise to lock.

*Optional features (may not be included on your chair).
For Français and Español versions visit www.steelcase.com.
Discomfort - What to do should you experience it

By Dr. Neil Speth and Janet Ford, PTMS

Most people experience muscle or joint discomfort from time to time. Discomfort typically signals either having exceeded normal levels of activity or having used body positions or movements not normally used. Examples might be discomfort experienced after doing extra yard work or after hiking in hilly terrain if only accustomed to walking on level surfaces.

Discomfort can occur from work activities. Discomfort that resolves after a few days is unlikely to progress to a level, requiring medical attention. If this occurs we can use discomfort to our advantage by assessing reasons for the discomfort. If you cannot identify the reason/s yourself, ask your supervisor or department safety coordinator for assistance in reviewing your work positions or habits. If additional assistance is needed, contact the ergonomics program at 734-6180. Often small changes at this point will resolve discomfort and prevent reoccurrence.

Recovery from discomfort can be shortened if symptoms are addressed early. Symptoms that progress to the point that they do not resolve over a period of time, or worsen, may require medical attention. If you feel symptoms are due to work activities, discuss this with your supervisor. Your supervisor can guide you through corrective steps that may help. Keep in mind that symptoms experienced at work may be a carry over from non-work related causes. If your symptoms are related to non-work activities such as: gardening, knitting, personal computer use, recreational activities/ hobbies or household chores, seek assistance through your private physician.

Some simple temporizing measures to combat discomfort:

- Alternate tasks frequently.
- Change positions often.
- Stretch every 1 to 2 hours.
- Use ice or heat to try to alleviate or reduce symptoms.
- Consider short-term use of OTC Tylenol or Ibuprofen if health issues allow.

“Stop for Safety”
UCDMC Worker’s Compensation Unit
(916) 734-6180