

AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust

Keep it in neutral

Practice proper posture

In the workplace, good posture is often referred to as neutral posture and is a key part of ergonomics to help you avoid musculoskeletal disorders. Neutral posture is:

- **Head straight and facing forward.** Extended periods of tilting, turning, or bowing your head put strain on your neck.
- **Straight back posture.** Extended periods of twisting to the side or bending forward put strain on your back.
- **Arms hanging comfortably to your side.** Shoulders not hunched, elbows close to your sides, and forearms parallel to the ground. Working with your arms over your head, extended forward, or out to the side puts strain on your shoulders and elbows.
- **Wrists in a straight line with your forearms.** Hands flexed up or down, bent to the side, or twisted for extended periods put strain on your wrists.
- **Standing with your feet a shoulder width apart** and your weight balanced.
- **Not squatting or kneeling for extended periods**—these positions put strain on your knees.
- **Sitting with thighs parallel to the floor**, knees bent about 90 degrees, and feet resting flat on the floor.

Follow these steps to improve your work space so you can maintain a neutral posture:

- **Adjust your work surface** to a good height for you.
- **If you stand for most of your workday, use anti-fatigue mats** and footrests to help reduce back strain.
- **If you sit for most of your workday, adjust your chair** so your back touches the chair back and your feet rest on the floor or a footrest.
- **Place your computer monitor directly in front of you** at arm's length and facing you. You should not have to turn your neck to look at the monitor. Place the monitor so that your eyes are aligned with a point 2 to 3 inches below the top of the screen.



- **Place your keyboard so you can place your hands/wrists in the neutral position** with elbows close to your body, wrists flat and in line with your forearms, and wrists not angled up or turned in or out. Do not rest your wrists on a wrist rest when typing.

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STRAIGHTEN-UP STRETCHES

Use these straighten-up stretches to practice proper posture:

1. Stretch your arms as high over your head as possible. Hold 5 seconds.
2. Wrap your arms around yourself and turn as far as you can to the left. Hold 5 seconds. Do the same to the right.
3. Sit on the floor with both legs in front of you. Bend one knee and place that foot on the floor outside of the opposite knee. Twist your upper body by placing the opposite elbow against the inside of the bent knee. Hold 5 seconds. Change feet, legs, and elbows to stretch the other way. Hold 5 seconds.
4. Lie on your back with knees bent. Place your hands on your thighs and sit up so your hands touch your knees and your shoulders leave the floor; your lower back should stay on the floor. Repeat 25 times. These sit-up curls strengthen abdominal muscles to help you sit and stand straight.

AHA Workers' Compensation

AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust Program is administered by Risk Management Resources (RMR), a division of BancorpSouth Insurance Services, Inc. www.bxsi.com

In March 2003 the AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust was established. The program provides workers' compensation coverage to AHA members.

Risk Management Resources, the administrator for the program, assists members in the areas of claims management, safety and loss control.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

How to cope with it at work

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) is an illness that results in severe and debilitating exhaustion. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), other symptoms include:

- Impaired memory or concentration
- Extreme, prolonged exhaustion following physical or mental activity
- Un-refreshing sleep
- Muscle pain
- Multi-joint pain
- Headaches of a new type
- Sore throat
- Tender lymph nodes

The CDC states that CFS “results in **a substantial reduction in occupational (work-related), personal, social or educational activities**” [emphasis added]. What steps can you take to manage CFS on the job?

1. **Work with your doctor** on a treatment plan that alleviates your CFS symptoms.
2. **Talk with your supervisor** about possible alternate ways to get the job done.
3. **Pace yourself.** CFS patients cannot endure regular cardiovascular exercise routines but must still remain active at moderate levels.
4. **Join a CFS support group.** Check with your health provider or visit www.cdc.gov/cfs for local groups and more information.

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