The Safety Zone

The Newsletter of the AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust

Workstation Ergonomics
How to use a computer monitor properly

Computer monitor placement is key to avoiding awkward body postures that lead to neck and back pain, as well as eyestrain.

How should you position the computer monitor?

Place the computer monitor so that you can easily read text displayed on it. Your head and torso should be upright, and your back should be supported by your chair. Position the monitor directly in front of you.

If you are working with printed materials, do not place the materials flat on a table. Instead, place the materials on a document holder that attaches to the top left or right corner of the monitor. Your documents should be close to your monitor and the same distance from your gaze. This will prevent awkward postures such as turning your head to see your screen or printed materials.

How do you adjust the monitor for eye level?

Place the top one-third of the computer monitor's screen at or directly below your natural gaze. Place the monitor between 18 and 24 inches from your eyes (or about one arm's length away). If you reach out, your fingertips should be able to touch, or almost touch, the screen of your monitor.

Placing the monitor too far from you or too close to you can cause eyestrain and back and neck pain. Adjust the height of your chair, or remove or add risers under the monitor to adjust your viewing angle.

If you are a bifocal user, lower the monitor or raise the chair height so you can maintain the appropriate neck posture. Tilt the monitor up toward you if needed. Watch out for glare when adjusting the tilt of your monitor.

How much time should you spend staring at the monitor?

Do not stare at the computer monitor for long periods of time. This causes eye fatigue and dryness. Often, users will blink less when viewing a monitor. Every now and then, focus on objects that are far away.

Give your eye muscles a chance to relax. Look away from the screen, and blink at

Owls should place both monitors at eye level.

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW?

QUIZ: WORKSTATION ERGONOMICS

Choose the correct response to the following statements.

1. **You should keep printed documents flat on a table when working at the computer.**

   True or False

2. **You should place the middle of your computer monitor's screen at or directly below eye level.**

   True or False

3. **You should place your computer monitor:**

   A. About 6 inches from your face

   B. Approximately an arm's length away from you

   C. About 3 inches below your chin

4. **Staring at a computer screen for long periods of time can hurt your eyes.**

   True or False

5. **If you use bifocals, you should lift your chin up to see the screen better.**

   True or False

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Workstation Ergonomics, continued

regular intervals to moisten your eyes. Alternate your tasks with other work duties that do not involve using the computer.

What is the proper amount of lighting to use?

Make sure you have proper lighting at your workstation. The light should be enough for you to clearly see the monitor screen and your printed materials but not so bright that there is a glare on the monitor screen. If available, use the monitor's function keys to adjust your brightness and contrast settings to reduce eyestrain.

Workstation Ergonomics Quiz

ANSWERS:

1. False.
   When working at a computer, position printed materials so that they are at eye level with your screen. Your documents should be close to your monitor and the same distance from your gaze.

2. False.
   Position your computer monitor's screen so that the top one-third of the screen is at or directly below your natural gaze.

3. B.
   Approximately an arm's length away from you. Your computer monitor should be placed between 18 and 24 inches from your eyes (or about one arm's length away). Your fingertips should be able to brush your computer monitor's screen.

4. True.
   Staring at your computer monitor screen for long periods of time can causes eye fatigue and dryness. Look away from your monitor now and then and blink repeatedly.

5. False.
   Lower the monitor or raise your chair up so that you can clearly see the screen without hurting your neck.

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Got News?

Do you have news that needs to be circulated or have a subject you would like for us to address? Let us know by emailing the newsletter editor at *tcreel@arkhospitals.org*.

AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust Program is administered by Risk Management Resources (RMR), a division of BXS Insurance Services. *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. Tina Creel, President of AHA Services, Inc., is the Group Manager of the Trust and provides oversight of the day-to-day operation of the Trust.

The Board of Trustees provides oversight of the overall operation of the Group Trust.