

Working Remotely: Office Ergonomics

By Justin Grooms
Senior Business Consultant
Gaspar Insurance Services

The key to preventing ergonomic-related injuries is to evaluate your workstation. Sound ergonomics is the idea of fitting the workspace to the employee and not the other way around. With that in mind, a lot of us already have poor posture. So we create a workspace at home that falls in line with our poor habits. Something that remote employees can do, which will cost no money at all, is to work on posture.

Practice Good Posture

1. Don't slouch!
2. Make sure that the positioning of your head is always above your shoulders.
3. Make sure that your butt touches the back of the chair.
4. Distribute your body weight evenly on both hips.
5. Bend your knees at a 90 degree/right angle and keep knees even with or slightly above hips (use a footstool if necessary).
6. Keep your feet flat on the floor.
7. Try to get up and move around at minimum of once every 20 min. On average, your body can only tolerate one position for about 20 minutes before needing readjustment. Taking a one-minute break every 20 minutes is helpful.

Consider These Workstation Improvements

One of the most important things to focus on from an ergonomic standpoint, especially if you are sitting for long periods, would be your chair. Ergonomically efficient office chairs are going to cost upwards of \$500 or more. If you are on a tight budget, my suggestion would be to order a chair that is a little less expensive (you can find great ones for around \$75) and supplement the comfort

level by purchasing a lumbar roll. You can order a quality lumbar roll from Amazon for as little as \$13 (there is one from "Vive" that works great).

Another problem for people who work at a computer is the height and angle of their computer monitors. You should position your monitor 18 to 30 inches from your eyes. The top of your screen should be at eye level or below so you look slightly down at your work. If your desk isn't at the proper height and you can't afford a new desk, my suggestion would be to purchase a monitor stand or riser. You can find these for as little as \$20. If glare is a problem, turn off some or all overhead lights and close blinds if possible.

My final suggestion for a budget would be a wrist rest. These help keep your wrists in a straight, natural position when using your keyboard. Do not use your wrist rest while typing. Use it to take occasional breaks from typing. The price for these typically ranges from \$10-\$30.

If money is no object for you or your boss, then I would suggest contacting a company like Humanscale, Herman Miller, or Knoll, who all have incredible office products, as well as consulting services, but at a pretty hefty price point.

For more information please contact Justin Grooms at justin.grooms@gasparinsurance.com or visit us at consulting.gasparinsurance.com