

**OFFICE  
ERGONOMICS**

# Working at the computer

While working at the computer, your posture can often be the cause of backaches, neck pain, elbow discomfort, etc., particularly if you spend a large part of your time doing so. How can the risk of developing pain and discomfort be reduced?

## 1. Adjust your chair to ensure that the design reference posture is used

- Feet placed flat on the floor
- Thighs horizontal with the floor
- Clearance behind the back of the knees
- Ankles, knees and hips at approximately 90 degrees
- Back in a vertical position or slightly inclined to the rear
- Back firmly placed on the back of the seat and resting against the lumbar support
- Shoulders relaxed
- Hands out straight, aligned with the forearms
- Arms close to the body
- Head held straight or slightly lowered
- Trunk and neck facing straight ahead (not twisted)

## 2. Adjust the other parts of the workstation, making sure the design reference posture is maintained

### A WORK SURFACE HEIGHT\*

- Should not interfere with the arm rests
- Must allow you to rest the forearms (if working directly on work surface)
- Must allow sufficient space for your legs

### B KEYBOARD AND MOUSE HEIGHT\*

- Must allow the arms to remain close to the body with the hands out straight, aligned with the forearms

### C MOUSE PLACEMENT

- Must allow the arms to remain close to the body (if not supported), and to be as symmetrical as possible

### D SCREEN HEIGHT AND PLACEMENT

- Must permit reading without difficulty
- Must allow head to remain straight and looking forward: the line of sight should never be above the horizontal, eyes are aligned with the top of the screen (the screen can be lower for those who wear bi-focal glasses)

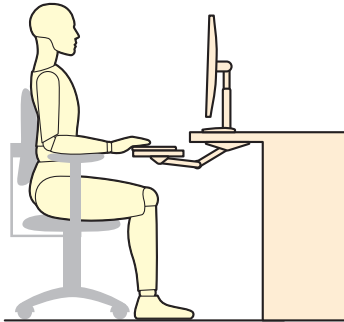
*\*If the work surface or the keyboard support is too high to allow the design reference posture to be used, compromise by slightly raising the chair height and adding a footrest. In any case, look into solutions for lowering the work surface, keyboard, or mouse height prior to considering this alternative.*

## ORGANIZING THE WORKSTATION

In all of the following situations, the arms lean on the armrests or on the work surface

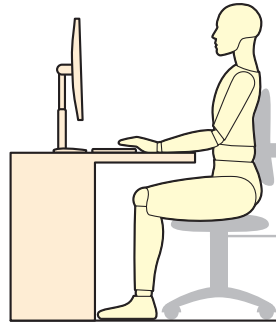
### A Adjustable height keyboard

This adjustment enables all aspects of the design reference posture to be followed.

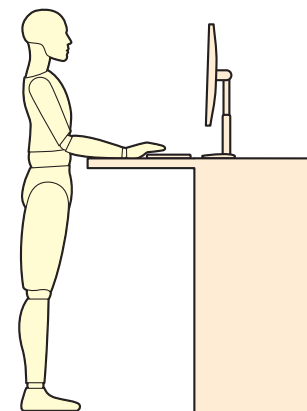


### B Keyboard on the work surface

Remove or lower the chair's armrests so they do not interfere with the work surface. The forearms are therefore placed further in front of you.

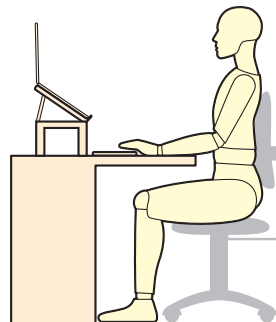


### C Standing



### D Laptop

Use a separate, stand-alone keyboard and mouse, using only the laptop's screen.



## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE RISK

- Take frequent breaks and mini-breaks
- Vary your tasks and your postures
- Divide heavy loads into a number of lighter ones (ex.: use three small binders rather than one big one); store them within reach and slide them instead of lifting
- Remember to move!